LILITH
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The Publication Committed to the Research and Concerns of Women Around the World

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LILITH

SUMMER 1994
VOLUME 19, NO. 2

FEATURES

7 CAPITALIST DAY–SUMMER CAMP MEMOIR
by tova

Jewish socialist summer camp is both the backdrop—and the motivating force—for a Jewish teenager's coming of age. Some of this is funny: the kids are taught to know the enemy–capitalism. Some is wry: the endless processing and discussion in an ideologically-driven setting. And most of all, it's downright moving to be reminded that summer camp can be a place where a girl finds the community and the stick-to-the-ribs values that that serve her well as she grows into her identity as a Jewish woman.

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10 THE NEW MINORITY: JEWS WHO CHOOSE JEWS
by Rachel Altman

Only 48% of Jews under 40 will marry Jews, the demographers tell us. Who are these Jews who choose Jews? Read the first-person accounts of the lives and times of eight Jewish women who are—or who want to be—romantically involved with other Jews. Their comments are personal, often funny, sometimes wrenchingly poignant. And an added attraction: Some Jewish questions to ask yourself before you fall in love. (Save the list for a friend if you've done your falling in love.)

15 JUDY CHICAGO
by Jyl Lynn Felman

She has moved from the lushness and intimacy of "The Dinner Party" to quite different imagery in her new "Holocaust Project" (soon to appear at a museum near you). Felman tells us about Chicago's process—using the collective talents of women across the country, often underre ognized—and the product which, even with its horrific subject matter, may not, Felman suggests, be harsh enough.

17 JOAN ROTH: SHE PHOTOGRAPHS A WORLD OF JEWISH WOMEN
as told to Susan Schnur

Here's the story (make that stories, plural) of Joan Roth, fearless feminist photojournalist. Roth has gone everywhere, dangerous and exciting—usually alone—to bring back photographs and the life stories of Jewish women in Yemen, Ethiopia, Morocco, India and elsewhere. For LILITH she renders here a startling set of portraits of Jewish women in Romania, Hungary, Uzbekistan, Ukraine and Buchara, including a witch who cures headaches, a caterer with an axe for a cleaver, and Seidy Gluck the aging Yiddish theater star.

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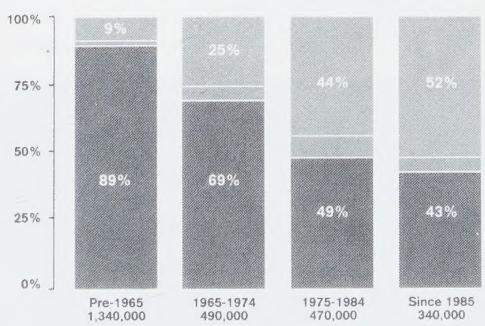
Marrying In/Marrying Out

The graph at right indicates the increasing number of Jews who marry non-Jews. The latest figures, from the 1990 National Jewish Population Survey, show that more than 50% of first marriages of Jews under 40 are intermarriages.



NJPS

LILITH is named for the legendary predecessor of Eve who insisted on equality with Adam: "After the Holy One created the first human being, Adam, the Holy One created a woman, also from the earth, and called her Lilith. Lilith said: 'We are equal because we both come from the earth...'" (From The Alphabet of Ben Sira, 23a-b)

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FEATURES

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23 WEARING MY JEWISH STAR
by Susan J. Gordon

When Seventh Avenue puts crucifixes on runway models, and catechism beads and crosses become a fashion statement, what does it mean for a Jewish women to wear a Star of David around her neck? Our author comes out of the jewelry box only on certain occasions, and she tells when—and why. In a related story, a young Jewish lesbian explores her own motivations for wearing identifying jewelry, and tells why she can't (yet) wear her Jewish star/pink triangle earrings to work.

26 THE STRENGTH OF TAMAR
A short story by Ingrid Hughes

Catch up with a Biblical story that's not so familiar to most of us. The desert has its ways, and Tamar her desires, and a feminist retelling its satisfaction. This tale, which we rarely read in Hebrew school, or examine as adults, involves a goat, a ring, a deception, and the victory of a smart woman determined to follow her own instincts.

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33 LILITH REVIEWS
Feminist books about disabilities, teaching as the New York Jewish woman's chosen profession; poet Alicia Ostriker on Ilana Pardes's biblical revisioning.

4 KOL ISHAH
News of Jewish Women from All Over

New, non-sexist Jewish studies curricula for Hebrew school students, created by women in their twenties looking for new ways to teach girls—and boys—about Judaism. The Museum of the Diaspora paints over women's faces! A costume exhibit showing us how our foremothers made the transition from the shtetl and the sheitel to Made in America.

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Where to Go for What—If You're Jewish and Female

Teaching tolerance—materials you can order; how to connect with other Jewish women when you travel abroad.

49 NAZI DAUGHTER
Adapted by Peter Sichrovsky and Ari Roth

In the startling format of a stage monologue — suitable for auditions, we imagine — a brief, chilling recollection of growing up with a Nazi father.

cover illustration by Lynne Feldman

ROM THE EDITOR

Because I was the youngest in my nuclear family, and the youngest by far in my cohort of first cousins, I always viewed each birthday as a victory. Soon I would be old enough to be taken seriously!

A couple of months ago I turned 50, and the LILITH staff, joined by my dear friend Vicki Rosenstreich of the Jewish Board of Family and Children's Services, surprised me in the office with flowers, food, and a birthday ritual created by Susan Schnur, our drummer, chanter, shaman and rabbi-in-residence. Here, in abbreviated form, is what went on:

First, Schnur (often referred to in the office by her last name to differentiate the Susans) led everyone in singing; then came the proclamations and the presents, all symbolic, according to instructions from the ritual-maker.

1. Schnur, noting that I'm able to let go of each issue of the magazine when the time comes for it to leave the nest and fly off to the printer, presented me with a tiny clay doll with an even tinier head (looking just like its mom, with slit eyes and a mouth like an "O") which comes out of its belly (and goes in again too).

2. Robin Beth Schaer, LILITH's editorial assistant and totally fearless can-do person, made me a light-brown clay object and asked me to identify it. I couldn't. "It's a bagel," she said. "A model of a bagel. And a bagel is a kind of a roll. And you're a role model. Get it?"

3. Elizabeth Michaelson, our intern, gave me real bagels, in honor of all the eating that goes on in the office and—sweetly—noted how we feed and nurture each other in more than literal ways.

Standing (l-r): Nora Mandel, Elizabeth Michaelson, Naomi Danis, Robin Beth Schaer, Leslie Margulies. Seated (l-r): Susan Weidman Schneider, Suan Schnur

4. Nora Mandel, development counsel and the woman who helps shape the grants that elicit the funds that help make LILITH possible, gave me a tape. Side One, "For a Jewish feminist editor," includes Christine Lavin's "Sensitive New Age Guys" and Janis Ian's amazing mainstream Holocaust melody, "Tattoo."

5. From Vicki, a plaque for my office wall: "This Work Space is Protected by a Goddess"

6. From Leslie Margulies, LILITH's advertising manager, a set of juggling cubes—every woman with multiple roles to play needs to practice with these, she said—and a scarf, "so you should look elegant while juggling."

7. An oblong package from Naomi Danis, managing editor, who really is responsible for making LILITH happen every three months. Inside? A first edition of James Thurber's evocation of the legendary *New Yorker* editor. Plus a poem by Naomi which ends, "For the boss, *My Years with Ross.*"

9. The End: a presentation by Schnur of a box of eggs from free-range chickens, each different: pale green, yellow, tiny, speckled, plain, mottled. "Just like us," said Schnur, "And you let each of us be who we are."

Another birthday: LILITH's next issue will celebrate the magazine's eighteenth anniversary! In Fall: some fascinating young women to follow into the future, an update on all the things we do now as Jewish women that we wouldn't—or couldn't—do in 1976, comments from LILITH readers and authors and a sampling of oldies-but-goodies from early issues. Plus our regular features and departments. Stay tuned!

Marking this milestone, LILITH has created a report on all the work we do aside from the magazine itself, including LILITH's Talent Bank of Jewish women experts (**please send for a Talent Bank form if you haven't already deposited your resume with us**); outreach programs to Jewish women in college and graduate school; investigations of Jewish women's health issues, collaborative efforts on behalf of innovative, non-sexist Jewish education for girls and women. To receive your free copy of LILITH's Annual Report, write to us at 250 W. 57 St., #2432, New York NY 10107.

Susan Weidman Schneider

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"CHAI" TEA

Want to celebrate LILITH's 18th birthday with a salon in your own home? We'll help you host a gathering of LILITH readers (and potential readers). We provide back issues, flyers and a 12-minute video, and names of LILITH subscribers in your area whom you can invite to your "salon"—and we can even suggest local participants from LILITH's growing Talent Bank. This is a great way to meet other Jewish feminists in your neighborhood to discuss recent LILITH articles, come up with ideas for future articles, and have a good time toasting the fact that LILITH LIVETH!

KOL ISHAH

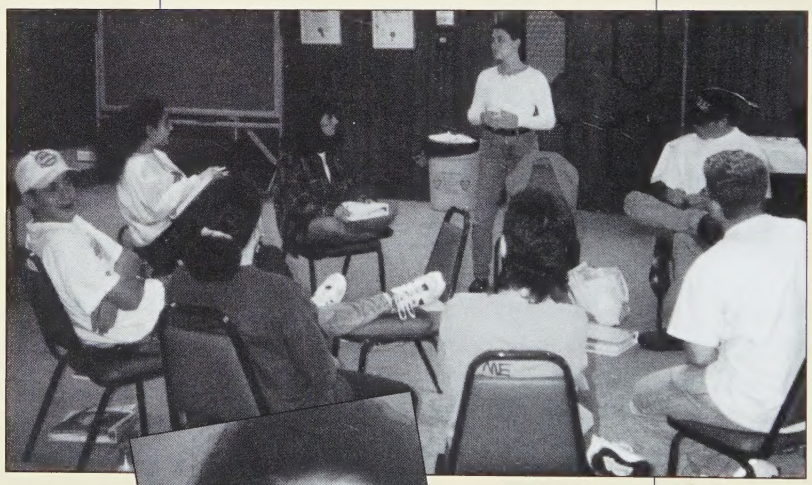
"WOMAN'S VOICE"—TRADITIONALLY, THE VOICE OF THE JEWISH WOMAN W/ NOT TO BE HEARD IN PUBLIC, LEST IT AROUSE MEN. NO MORE. THESE PAG ARE MEANT FOR NEWS ABOUT JEWISH WOMEN IN OUR OWN STRONG VOICES.

New Ways to Learn

Whole worlds are opening up to students in innovative non-sexist curricula for both sexes. Here are two examples:

Gesher L'Kesher, literally,"Bridge to a Connection," is a youth leadership program with the goal of helping Jewish adolescents connect with their heritage and the Jewish community by actively involving young people in their own Jewish education.

Gesher L'Kesher uses a "peer mentoring" model as its framework. Older learners participate in the religious education of the younger students. Through interactive learning activities, the older students help younger ones define their positions on contemporary issues using the beliefs of Judaism. Both groups learn the value of applying Jewish traditions and values to their daily adolescent life and in making important life choices. The students seem to enjoy the opportunity to learn with their peers, and to teach them. As one student explains, "I was allowed to spend more time in a group situation with other Jews. There was an automatic closeness, even if other parts of our personalities were totally different. It's a good feeling to have a common thread of comfort."



Gesher L'Kesher at Temple Judea in Long Island

Paula Michele Chaiken

The impetus for the program came from the rabbi and principal of Temple Emanu-El in Westfield, New Jersey who learned from a congregant about a successful high-school peer group program. The two-year curriculum was then designed by Jewish educators for post-Bar/Bat Mitzvah and post-Confirmation ages.

Victoria Sackser, project director for *Gesher L'Kesher*, says that she was attracted to the program's "team mentoring" ideology because of her own positive experience as a peer leader in college.

Many of the lessons deal explicitly with gender relations. Some of the topics include "Men, Women and Sexuality," "Men, Women and Responsibility" and "The Role of Women in Modern-Day Judaism." In addition to lessons specifically about women, the whole curriculum takes into account the different experiences and perspectives of boys and girls. For example, in one lesson, says Sackser, girls are taught about steroids in sports and boys learn about eating disorders.

Sharon Gallo, coordinator of *Gesher L'Kesher* at Temple Emanu-El in Westfield says, "This is an ongoing journey of discovery of ourselves and others, and how our attitudes, values and behavior affect the world around us."

Girls especially may feel empowered by *Gesher L'Kesher* as they develop leadership skills. Students at the pilot schools where this program has been in effect for the past two years facilitate group discussions, foster group cohesion, think critically, solve problems and serve as Jewish role models. feel more 'Jewish' because I participated educating people about Judaism," on mentor explains. Another reports that wh she has learned "has made me mo comfortable with myself as a Jew."

For more information, contact *Gesh L'Kesher*, 997 Lenox Drive, Suite 30 Lawrenceville NJ 08648. (609) 844-1040.

"I've never learned so much tha never heard about before," sa Mitch Furlett, 16, who is learnin about the different roles women and men in Judaism the course "The Matriarchs an Patriarchs" taught by Paula Miche Chaiken. "We compared the well-know story of Abraham and h son Isaac to a story we ha never learned before abo Jepthah, who fulfilled h promise to God an sacrificed his only child, h daughter, when he returne victorious from war *[Judg 10:6-12:7]*."

"When I was in religio school, no one bothered tell me about the positiv female role mode throughout our history. hope to change that," say Paula Michele Chaike who developed a curriculum on gender an Judaism while majoring in English at Du University. Her own struggles wit Judaism and feminism ("I just couldn't de with sitting upstairs") led her to develop course for post-Bar/Bat Mitzvah student "Matriarchs and Patriarchs" was receive very well, she says, when she first taught at Temple Judea Reform in Durham, N.C before graduating from Duke in 1993. Sh now teaches it to high school students a Temple Shalom in Chicago.

Her students respond very positively bot to the subjects and the teacher. Rache Pomerantz, 17, says that because "m teacher is a feminist, I can relate to her bett

d I feel more connected to what we are rning about." Natalie Furlett, 15, said she gan the class thinking that women were ıored in Judaism, "but now I realize that ›men are included but we are not always ıght those passages. These women have come role models to me."

Chaiken says that the male students tended be disruptive when the classes began, but ıt the crowning moment of her still-new ıching career occurred during a feminist ler. One of the boys asked her, "What fference does it make if there are four ughters or four sons?" She explained how ful it is to feel yourself excluded from such important text, after which the boy nodded d said, "Oh. I get it!"

Mitch, one of the only boys in the class, says, "I was really nervous at first. My sister had taken the course and she was always coming home talking about women's stuff so I didn't know what to expect. The class has been really interesting and it's more apparent to me now that I should ask about women's roles in my other classes."

The twelve-week course includes a wide range of topics, from biblical stories to present-day issues, all interpreted from the perspective of gender. The last four weeks of the course help students connect what they have learned about their heritage to their own lives. They examine different generational stereotypes and experiences by interviewing their parents and grandparents and by writing about themselves.

The students are taking the ideas and topics they've learned outside of the classroom as well. Rachel says that "now when I pray I add the names of the Matriarchs when we say the names of the Patriarchs even though my synagogue doesn't." Natalie is now noticing the inequalities in her other classes."I ask more questions in my other classes about how women are treated, and I just did a high school report on women in religion."

Chaiken's goal is to make the curriculum available to organizations throughout the country. She can be reached at 450 West St. James Place #2, Chicago IL 60614. (312) 665-8184.

—Robin Beth Schaer

Clothing as a Measure of Assimilation

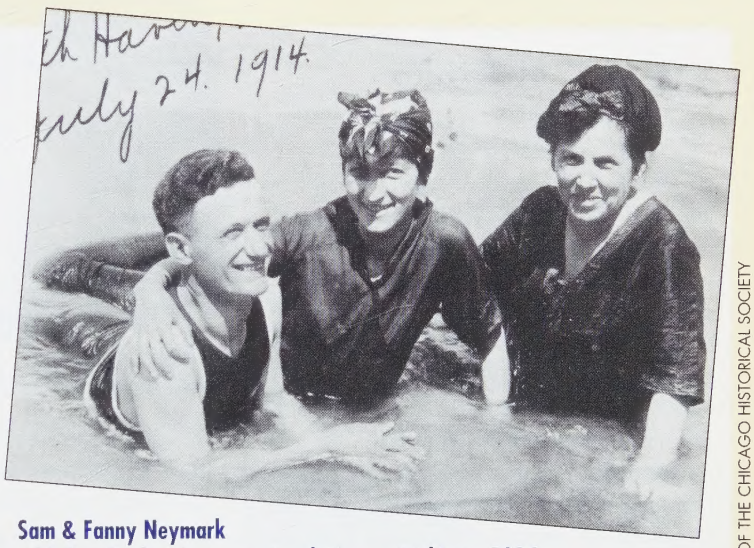
They threw their hand-made dresses and traditional head-coverings into the cold Atlantic as they left the European harbor headed for the United States. Adopting American clothing was often the first step in adjusting to a new homeland for the over one million Jewish women who emigrated from Eastern Europe to the United States around the turn of the century. The Chicago Historical Society museum exhibition, "Becoming American Women: Clothing and the Jewish Immigrant Experience, 1880-1920," explores this change of clothes as a sign of a changing consciousness and analyzes its cultural, religious, and social implications. According to curator Barbara Schreier, "The exhibition uses clothing to study broader historical issues." Schreier conducted a nationwide search and assembled close to 500 artifacts including clothing, photographs, letters and other belongings to help tell part of the history of American Jewish women.

In the first part of the exhibit, "The Old Home," clothing and personal objects brought from Eastern Europe reveal the lives Jewish women left behind. Visitors are taken from Europe to Ellis Island through photographs, recorded oral histories and documents. A letter from an American woman to a relative warns, "Don't take any clothing, because when you get here we will not let you wear those clothes."

The first steps new immigrants took to remake themselves, and their new clothing for their new lives is shown in a section of the exhibit called, "They Don't Wear Wigs Here." Family members talk about the difficulties immigrant women had in reconciling their desire to become "American" and their desire to preserve religious and cultural traditions.

A woman remembers, "In the *shtetls* our shoes were handed down from one to another. In the wintertime I remember that when I did go outside, my feet were wrapped in cloth, wound like bandages. I never saw high topped shoes before and it seemed like the foot only had one toe. And I was thinking, my God, what's wrong here, what kind of country is this? People have pointy feet."

Conflict between mothers and daughters is the focus in the final section, "Reflection." One daughter says, "When my mother came to my graduation she was the only woman there whose hair was not bobbed. I wouldn't even introduce her, I was so embarrassed."



Sam & Fanny Neymark with Nan Ruskey in water, South Haven, Michigan, 1914.

PHOTO COURTESY OF THE CHICAGO HISTORICAL SOCIETY

At the end of the exhibit there is a wall of images of other immigrants, both historical and contemporary, to reinforce the point that many of the concerns confronting these Jewish women at the turn of the century are shared by new groups of people as they leave the familiar and travel to the unknown to start a new life.

The exhibit is accompanied by a 150-page catalog written by Schreier, which includes stories and illustrations. Mannequins used in the exhibit were given faces cast from the faces of the real-life descendants featured in the exhibit. The "life casts" by artist Donna Schudel give the mannequins a realistic appearance.

"Becoming American Women" is on display at the Chicago Historical Society until January 2, 1995, then at The Ellis Island Immigration Museum in New York from March 15-July 16, 1995 and at the American Jewish History National Museum in Philadelphia from September 10-December 31, 1995.

—R.B.S.

Mothertongue Theater Explores What It Means to be a Jew

"What makes a Jew a Jew?" This question, pondered throughout the centuries by rabbis, secular Jews and Christians alike, is reiterated by the Mothertongue Feminist Theater Collective in "Jewish Women and Friends." Although at the close of the script the question remains far from resolved, it is explored from a decidedly female perspective by members of the cast, most of whom are Jewish.

"One day," begins one story, " . . . a group of boys . . . started throwing stones at us and chased us inside the house, calling us dirty Jews. I was so bewildered and frightened. When my parents came home I asked them, because I didn't know, 'What is a Jew?'"

The non-Jew doesn't have the answer either. "I was taught that Christ was a Jew . . . I was taught that the Jews were God's chosen people . . . The only thing I wasn't told was what makes a Jew a Jew."

"Jewish Women and Friends" is one of over 30 performance pieces produced by this collective. Founded in 1976 by a group of San Francisco State University women, Mothertongue is one of the last surviving feminist theater collectives. There are no auditions or writing submissions required for membership in Mothertongue; a woman need only be a self-defined feminist to join.

The Mothertongue creative process is deliberately vague to allow each script its own natural process, but it goes something like this: someone at a monthly meeting suggests a topic, the newsletter then delivers this information, with a contact number, to the more then 70 members. A script meeting is organized, which in the beginning usually means a potluck dinner, to create a supportive friendly atmosphere. At the meeting, women share their experiences about the subject. Ten or 15 minutes is spent writing down any thoughts or memories triggered by the discussion, and the writing is then shared with the group.

In the next phase the script is organized and refined, performances are booked at cafes, colleges and bookstores and the script goes into rehearsal. Before the show goes on the road, the piece is performed for the entire collective in order to get their feedback and approval.

The loose structure, says Corky Wick, one of the original founding

The Mothertongue Feminist Theater Collective

"tongues," "lets people work at their own pace. Producing something highly polished isn't what we're after. This is Theater of the Sincere. We get quality through honesty and vulnerability."

Corky Wick explains that for a long time Jewish women within the group had recognized a need "to focus on our culture, our humor, and our resistance to passing as non-Jewish." When they did decide to work on a Jewish script, the group got bogged down with food. Every meeting turned into a sumptuous feast, the preparation and consumption of which distracted from focus on the actual script. Although a plethora of material was being produced, none of it was being organized into a cohesive whole. Thus, after an all-out groaning-board Passover seder, the group placed a moratorium on potlucks and concentrated on preparing for performance.

The script covers a variety of aspects of Jewish women's experience. There's uncovering anti-Semitism: "We moved into another non-Jewish neighborhood only be warned by my mom not to yell or mak noise so our neighbors wouldn't refer to as 'loud Jews'." There's praise for Jewi food: "The Bessarabian version of Sunday brunch—*schmalz* herring, ra onions and baked potatoes." There nostalgia for Jewish names: "No one h called me 'Corinnesh'kl' a long, long time." There are memories of *bubbe meiseh*: "Bubbie to me these stories while cutting the onions cleaning the bathtub—both good places f the tears to fall." And, of course, there the pain of the Holocaust: "Kovne, Viln Galicia, Nohilev, Minsk, Chernigov, Kie Bessarabia. These were the names Eastern Europe before the Holocaust . . *Dovrish, Pesse, Estheril, Chaim, Schmie Faygeh, Naumi*. These were the names my ancestors. All are dead. *Toit*."

As for what makes a Jew a Jew, Cork Wick says, "It's the eternal question. I like to keep discussing it."

To learn how to start a Mothertongu group in your community, send $8.00 f the Mothertongue Handbook t Mothertongue Theater c/o The Women Building, 3543 18th Street, San Francisc CA 94110.

—Marcy Shein

(Kol Ishah continues on page 3

capitalist day

a memoir about summer camp

by tova

recently in a poem i included references to the zionist socialist organization, *dror*, that became my childhood life and savior. i was a child who was often depressed and suicidal, who got harassed for my lack of "social skills" and how i dressed and looked; i didn't have many friends. i know this was not just who i was, but also had to do with anti-semitism, classism, my family's leftist "leanings," and the family abuse i experienced. but i didn't realize all this at the time. so when lisa helman, a jewish girl, decided she could be friends with me, i didn't analyze it. lisa introduced me to *dror*, where among other somewhat politicized jewish children, i found some sense of comfort and belonging.

i was about 11 when i started to go with lisa to meetings at the brooklyn *mo'adon*(meeting house). friday night *shabbat*, singing, programs, discussions, dancing, and then hanging out on ave. j, getting pizza and ice cream, being rowdy kids hassled by the cops for loitering. i loved it. i really wanted to go to the camp, but despite its being unbelievably cheaper than any camp around, it was still too expensive for my family. one year, though, i convinced my mother it was cheaper to

Photo from the exhibition Camp Pinecliffe, 1981: Photographs by Gay Block, on view, together with the exhibit A Worthy Use of Summer: Jewish Summer Camping in America at the Jewish Museum, 1109 Fifth Ave, NYC, NY 10128. (212) 423-3200. Through August 21.

send me to camp for seven weeks than to feed me at home for seven weeks (which was true). i don't know what convinced my mother, or if my family's fluctuating financial situation was better that year, but i got to go.

aside from convincing my family of the cost efficiency of camp, i didn't tell them much else about it. they weren't zionists and were not impressed with my new-found zeal, though somewhere inside i think they were glad for my jewishness that got me off the n.y. streets. i didn't tell my family that the camp was run by two or three *shlichim*--young israeli soldiers in their twenties who often treated the camp as if it were an army training center. i didn't tell them we did "field sports," which meant learning to scale walls, jump off three-story buildings into nets, make and climb rope bridges, learn self-defense.

"i convinced my mother it was cheaper to send

i didn't tell them once a summer we had *yom yishuv* to commemorate jews settling in israel in accordance with then british "homesteading" laws. the counselors woke us up, by surprise, at about 3 in the morning, had us cross rivers to sneak into campsites and then build by daybreak whole villages with ten-foot-tall defense fences, bathrooms, kitchens, and who knows what else. then we played war games of spy and capture all day long. i didn't tell my family we went on survival hikes. about midnight, they put us in groups of three or four and blindfolded us. then they'd take us about 40 miles out of camp, give us a dime for a phone call, drop us off, and tell us to find our way back by sunrise. i didn't tell them that, though the truth is i didn't tell my family much in general about my life since i never knew how they'd react. but something told me telling them this wouldn't make a good case for letting me go back to *ein harod.*

despite some of my family's history of being communists and anarchists, i didn't tell them about the socialist parts either. i didn't tell them how we had *kuppah*, collective money. at the beginning of the summer everyone in each group gave any money they had to their counselors. all during the summer, we made group decisions about what to do with our money. no one was supposed to feel bad about how much money they had, and we were all supposed to learn about collectivity. there wasn't a canteen to buy candy, like i knew they had in fancy camps, so having individual money didn't make too much difference. still, we all would keep out some percentage of our money so we could escape to the general store down the road to buy candy when the opportunity arose. we often got caught at the store, as more than half of our group foolishly disappeared during hebrew lessons or *avodah* (work time).

sometimes, however, we were more clever about our escapades. every year, for instance, we had nations day. each group picked out a nation or ethnic group to be, and we'd get an area of camp, make costumes, do a play or some program about the group, and get food of that group. one year, we decided to be middle-class americans. as middle-class americans, we demanded to be by the pool area, since that's where they hung out in the summer, and we wanted barbecued steak, french fries, and ice cream sundaes, all major treats in camp. we asked for beer too, but they wouldn't let us have it, though they fell for everything else, as we were being good little socialists.

as a good socialist camp, we also had capitalist day. capitalist day was always strategically done immediately before parents' visiting day. as well as having "educational value," it was a good way to clean up the camp, since you had to work to get money. the counselors loved this day too, 'cause the kids were always trying to do stuff like fix up their shelves, make their beds, etc., to get a little extra cash. on capitalist day you woke up with (play) money under your pillow and were born rich or poor. then you worked different jobs during the day, cleaning and such, to get money. there was a stock market and a bank. at night there was the rich people's dinner and the poor people's dinner and the poor people had to serve the rich before they could eat. after dinner, there was an auction for those who could afford it. the day after capitalist day there were long *sichot*--discussions--about what it all meant and how it felt.

one capitalist day my group decided to be "bums." we didn't work and said we didn't care if we ate with the poor people, 'cause we didn't want to clean up other people's shit. we understood a little too well, perhaps, about capitalism and capitalist day. we influenced other kids and the whole day was almost a bust, and our group got "special" *sichot* the next day.

another year we decided to rob the bank. we went in, grabbed all the money we could and stuffed it down our pants. we weren't too suave about this robbery, as we ran across camp to our bunks attracting everyone's attention. money started falling out of our clothes and we left quite the trail. the younger kids, seeing all this "free money," started chasing us, or rather the money. the rest of capitalist day was cancelled and the whole camp had discussion groups for the remainder of the day, to talk about what we had done, our influence and responsibility on the younger kids (we were 13 and 14 at the time), what we had learned from

our experience, etc., ad infinitum, way past our ability to sit still.

despite all our escapades, we all had a lot of responsibility towards running the camp. at 13 i became a *sichah* leader, and led discussion groups for the younger kids, and when we got together with other camps. we also built a lot of the camp our-

(immigrated to israel), others left the movement but continued being jewish activists or got involved with other jewish activities, and some left their jewish identity behind completely. i began to leave the movement at 16 when i moved out of town to start college, later met up with some movement people when i tempor-

me to camp for 7 weeks than to feed me at home."

selves. a few times a week we had *avodah*--work. we were either building or repairing bunks, the laundry rooms, a gym, cleaning the pool, or doing maintenance work. of course, sexism abounded and we always complained when the girls didn't get to do enough building, and we loved it when they let us. aside from *avodah*, we all had to do either serving or washing for a few meals a week. washing meant five of us had to wash all the dishes, and serving meant you came early to the meal, set up the dining room, served food, and then cleaned and swept everything up afterwards. no one liked it and everyone tried to get in good with whomever was handing out kitchen duty.

we did have some "regular" camp activities like swimming and arts and crafts, but there was so much more and there was so much magic. every friday night, we'd have a special *shabbat*. we'd get dressed up in white shirts or our best leotards. we'd go to the dining room and sing with a spirit i never knew i could have, with a passion i never knew was possible. we'd have a special dinner, with chicken soup, candles, challah and cake.

each week a different group would be in charge of doing an *oneg shabbat*, a program that somehow honored *shabbat*. i loved watching and doing *oneg*. my group mostly did political programs, plays about anti-semitism and jewish history and culture, plays about racism and socialism. once we did a play about the oppression of native americans throughout white u.s. history. ten of us were on stage. we started out with some buffy st. marie songs. we all dressed in black and held flashlights to our faces. then one of us would tell a story of the oppression of native americans in some period of history. when that person was done with the story, she would turn off her flashlight and fall down. after each *oneg*, they'd play israeli folk dancing music over the loudspeaker and we would dance under the summer stars and mountains of the catskills. i danced until my body couldn't dance any more and then i danced some more.

in light of all this precious memory, even if somewhat romanticized, it's difficult to explain why i left the movement. people got older, began to sever ties and have other interests, as well as the movement having more and more financial problems and the situation in the middle east becoming more complex. some people made *aliyah* arily moved to israel at 18, and then severed my ties completely when i came out at 19. i embraced the feminist and lesbian community with the fervor i had learned in *dror*. but i thought being a lesbian meant i was to leave that world of jewish identity so completely that i even threw away my jewish song sheets. but a few years later, i began to discover how these worlds could meet, and i became more and more active in the circles that intersected my jewish, lesbian feminist, and working-class values, identities, and communities.

as an adult, i still have serious bouts of depression. in a way, though, some of the things that helped me when i was in *dror* are the same things that can help me today. surely, my politics today are not the same as when i was in *dror*, and i know now that my education there was often sorely lacking in terms of discussing or analyzing the occupation, which had already started, or some of the realities of the situation in israel with arabs and palestinians, sephardim, working-class jews, and women. i can think of many ways it could've been "better," but i can't deny the value of what was there. in its own way, the education i got helps me to face some of the hard issues of the middle east today. and the roots of learning not only the importance of my jewishness, but of my politics and compassion for all oppressed people came to life in *dror*, as well as invaluable lessons about passion, spirituality, commitment, creativity, process, and community.

i can still feel at my best when i'm teaching israeli folk dancing at a jewish lesbian chanukah party for jewish lesbians and their families and friends. i can still get excited and feel pride when having a discussion about collective process and i tell the stories of capitalist day, and i'm responded to with wonder and laughter. when i do these things, i can bring the best of my personal and political past and present together, and find hope for a future. i can remember that despite my depressions, despite what the world really looks like these days, i and others i know can stand strong like a tree and branch out, because we can be proud and loving towards our roots. ■

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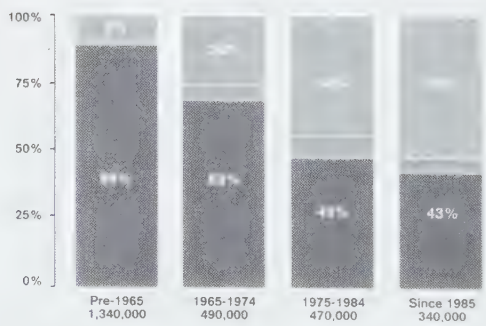
The New Minority

JEWS WHO CHOOSE JEWS

With the high rate of intermarriage, LILITH looks not at the glass half empty (as has everyone), but at the glass half full. Lots of Jews are finding Jewish partners. Who are they? Why are they making these choices? Here's an analysis of the statistics, interviews with eight Jewish women who choose to be in romantic relationships with other Jews, and some Jewish questions to ponder before you fall in love.

Marrying In/Marrying Out

The graph at right indicates the increasing number of Jews who marry non-Jews. The latest figures, from the 1990 National Jewish Population Survey, show that more than 50% of first marriages of Jews under 40 are intermarriages.



by Rachel Altman

Thirty years ago, Jews were considered the most endogamous ethnic group in the United States; in the early 1960s, less than 11 percent of Jews who married chose non-Jewish spouses. But the authoritative1990 study of North American Jews by the Council of Jewish Federations found that, since 1985, just over half of Jews who marry wed non-Jews (the study didn't look at partners who don't or can't legally marry), and that less than one-third of the children of interfaith marriages are being raised as Jews. In addition, affiliation with synagogues and Jewish organizations is down to 40 percent, an all-time low. According to the survey's analysts, "The current pattern probably means that there will be net losses to the . . . Jewish population in the next generation."

These numbers sent shock waves through the American Jewish community, with a flurry of articles appearing in both the Jewish and the mainstream press: "Troubling Times for U.S. Jews," "Holiday Season Tests Beliefs for Interfaith Marriages," "Intermarriage Seen by Some Jews as Threat of Being 'Loved to Death.'"

But the news isn't all bad. Yes, over 50 percent of us are marrying out, but what about the rest, the ones who are choosing "in?" LILITH decided to talk with Jews who have already committed to Jewish partners (or who are orienting themselves to do so). In the midst of a highly assimilated world, many share an increased awareness of the complexities of interfaith coupling and partner choice.

Who are these Jews who choose Jews? How has it happened that they arrived at endogamy—was it accidental or deliberate? Was it an unconscious choice that, in retrospect, seemed conscious after all? Have the intermarriage statistics themselves had an effect on dating/mating patterns?

What are the factors involved in finding a partner who is either Jewish or not? We may choose "out" simply because we choose an individual who happens not to be Jewish, or we may choose out as a means of escaping a family to which we feel overly bound. We may choose "in" because we seek a romantic partner who reflects our early love relationships, and with whom we feel "at home," or of whom we know our parents (or grandparents) would approve.

Developmental stages likewise play a role: Many of us make

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the decision to become partnered in our early twenties, when we're in an early stage of separation from our families—some of these choices are reactive. Some of us are entirely present-oriented ("It never occurred to me that Brendan would not only be my partner, but the father of our children; I didn't think about life after 29.") Sometimes later on in our lives, when our relationships with our parents have changed, and we've maybe reconnected with Jewish life, we find ourselves faced with unexpected consequences in relation to our earlier choices.

All of this is not to say that there's a right and a wrong way. Choosing a non-Jewish partner, for example, does not necessarily mean leaving Jewish life. As one informant in an interfaith marriage told LILITH, "It's ironic, because my husband and I lead a much "Jewisher" life than do my siblings who married Jews. We belong to a shul—they don't—and we send our kids to Hebrew school. We have an active Jewish life, and it's not just out of guilt. Whereas perhaps my siblings and their partners just "assume" that they're Jewish, my husband and I feel that we need to really make a choice, and to define our lives around it."

What follow are the experiences of eight Jewish women who have chosen (or plan to choose) Jewish partners. Culled from several dozen, their voices, honest, insightful and funny, speak to real experiences with love and attachment.

THE WOMEN SPEAK

Interviews by Susan Schnur, Karen Prager and Justyn Lezin

Dana Katz, 24, head resident at Smith College; currently with a Jewish boyfriend.

I've had Jewish and non-Jewish boyfriends, though now I'm dating Danny, a Jew, very seriously. I used to think, "It's not that something is MISSING with a non-Jew—it's that something is ADDED with a Jew." But now, for the record, I believe that something IS missing with a non-Jew.

I had this non-Jewish boyfriend who once good-naturedly said to me, while I was in his arms, "How did you get such a cute nose?" He had just been hanging out with a Jewish friend of his who has a big nose. We had it out immediately. After that, I began to ask myself, 'If I looked more Jewish—'too' Jewish—would the boyfriend be repelled?' Increasingly I worried that I was too Jewish . . . all this Hebrew and Yiddish would slip out. Would he make another inadvertent comment about my being a Jew, and upset me?

My parents never restricted my dating, which was smart on their part. I was raised in a non-Jewish town, but every summer I went to Habonim camp and I'd "hook up" there—which would "keep" me through the year until the next summer. I could be with a Jewish guy there, at Habonim, because it was a very positive framing of being Jewish.

"Being able to marry another Jew is also an expression of self-love."

What clicks with Danny—I mean, I wouldn't feel a bond with a yeshiva bocher or a frat Jew—is that we have very similar upbringings, though he's from Vancouver and I'm from Maryland. He has one European-born parent, like me; he spent chunks of time in Israel, like me, and grew up in Habonim camps. Both his grandparents and mine lived in the same town, Kiryat Chaim, in Israel; we can talk about the Burger Ranch there and it makes sense. A foundation has been laid with basic questions of identity already answered—not just Christian vs. Jewish, but sub-types of Jewishness. This doesn't mean conversations between us are boring. Being able to love another Jew is also an expression of self-love.

We share an interest in Israel and in critiquing Israel. As Jews, we're sensitive to issues of feminism and homophobia; Danny had a gay counselor who meant a lot to him; I had, in a Jewish context, positive lesbian role models. I consider these Jewish values, and important.

It felt good to meet Danny's mother. For Pesach she and I put a feminist seder together. I felt proud being able to establish a bond with Lucy that we have partially through the fact that we are both Jewish women.

There is a comfort with Danny that is specific. When I speak in my most natural way, Yiddish and Hebrew words will come out; my inflections become more "Jewish," and it's wonderful that Danny joins me in that.

During my training here at Smith to become a head resident, we had this "Wellness" test. One part was intended to gauge your open-mindedness. The question was, "Would you date someone outside your religion/ethnicity/culture?" I scored lower on the whole test because of my answer to this question. It's so interesting—why is Jews being with Jews a negative? Multiculturalism being a goal that Smith (and I) strive for puts Jews in an awkward position where it becomes a negative issue of exclusivity instead of positive value of identification.

Yehuda Amichai has a poem that goes, "Advice for good love: don't love a woman from far away. Choose one from nearby the way a sensible house will choose local stones that have frozen in the same cold and basked in the same scalding sun."

Eve Ostriker, 29, astrophysicist; married to a man who's 51% Jewish.

Jewish men, in my experience , seem to have a greater appreciation of women like myself—that is, women who value their own independence, ideas and intellect. I generally feel that Jewish couples keep their feelings undisguised, don't care about superficial appearances, have a kind of relaxed, "real" style of social relations.

My husband is half Jewish, but we decided that our daughter, now 4 months old, would be Jewish. We

gave her a Jewish name, Abigail, and that's important to both of us. My husband's background—half Jewish, half Quaker—has given him some trouble, some identity confusion. Through seeing what he's struggled with, I think it's easier to make a religious choice—like telling Abigail that she's Jewish right off the bat—and stay with it. I didn't realize how intact my Jewish identity was until I saw how complicated my husband's was.

For me Judaism means you have a people, history, Torah, stories, that you have a tradition that values thinking about meanings, reading, discussing. For me Judaism is like my womanhood—I just have it, it's something that backs me up.

Justyn Lezin, 22, AIDS advocate; currently unpartnered.

My fear is that I won't be with a Jewish partner. My former (and only serious) partner, Becky, wasn't Jewish—I realized I spent a lot of time fantasizing about what it would be like to be with someone who was "organically" Jewish. When I first met Becky, I was so sure she was Jewish—she looked Jewish; we were able to talk in a familiar way that I thought was Jewish, and that was real attractive to me.

So I was surprised and a tiny bit disappointed to find out that Becky wasn't Jewish. She was Catholic. But Becky loved that I was Jewish. She was attracted to all things Jewish (and this wasn't about a Gentile eroticizing a Semite as exotic). She would say, "My Jewish girlfriend"—she was proud of that; it would throw me. Becky used to say about herself, "I feel I'm not ethnic enough." I was stunned—compared to her I was glaringly ethnic. That had an impact on my identity. Being with Becky for three years, and being at a college where there were only 4% Jews, helped me articulate my Jewish identity.

It doesn't necessarily follow that positively identifying as a Jew (which I've done since I was really small) means that you want to share that identity with a partner. With Becky, I wasn't at that evolutionary place yet. But now I feel what a tremendous luxury it would be—to be with someone who is unconflicted about her Judaism.

One thing that possibly kept me with Becky so long was her complicated relationship to Judaism—her grandfather was a Hungarian Jew, married to a Catholic woman. He was murdered in a concentration camp, and Becky's father was raised in hiding, as a Catholic (although her grandmother actually hated the Church). Becky's grandmother thought that the more connected her son was to the Church, the less the chance that he would be taken from his mother. So with this as her background, Becky is searching.

I'm solid in my lesbian identity, grounded, and so was Becky, and that was wonderful. It would be great to be at this same grounded level Jewishly with another Jew. I don't want to constantly explain and educate my partner about this big part of me. I don't just want to be with a Jewish person; I want to be with a Jew who is untroubled and positive about being a Jew.

It's a given to me that I want to have children, though it's scary to me (as a lesbian) to think how this will unfold. Through teaching Hebrew School, I'm stunned to see how deep the confusion is in interfaith families. Their religious ambivalence percolates through each member of the family. As a lesbian parent, I feel like I'm going to have a lot of struggles, and I'm prepared to go through them—I'll have rewards too. But I'm not prepared to go through an interfaith conflict. I want an organic Jewish household; not one that's self-consciously constructed.

Now, actually, Becky's converting. I'm of two minds. One part of me thinks, "Why?" I feel critical; for me, being Jewish is cultural, and you can't really religiously convert into it. But the other part of me acknowledges that that's really attractive. Like, "Call me in 20 years, and we'll talk. When it's not something new—when you're no longer struggling."

Amy Trachtenberg, 41, clinical social worker; married to a Jewish man.

My aging played a role in my choosing a Jewish husband. If I had gotten married earlier in my life (I was 36 when I first met my husband), I don't know that I would have chosen a Jew. I certainly didn't have a Jewish background. My two brothers have each had two wives—none of them Jewish.

I had gotten more religiously involved in my early 30's specifically because I was single, alone, looking to make connections. The first Jewish thing I did was sign up for this Saturday morning class in Torah study—I did this just because I had nothing else to do Saturday a.m. at 9. I was also doing regular single's stuff: dances, dinners. I love to dance. I took a chamber music class at the YWCA. I actually did bowl once. But the Torah class hooked me in strongly. I attended for three years, and then started going to services and learning Hebrew.

Deciding to marry someone Jewish, when I was 35, actually made my social life much easier. I started to date differently; I was more focused in how to meet someone, and where to go. I just went to the Jewish singles events. I had a good life; I didn't need to date just to date. I wasn't lonely, but I wanted to be in the right place at the right time.

So my strategy was I would make myself go to any Jewish singles event for an hour. I wouldn't say, "this is my evening," "this is my life"—but "this is what I have to do." From Princeton, I went to Philadelphia, put ads and answered them in the Jewish Exponent.

Having a Jewish home is wonderful; I didn't have this as a single person. It's different to light the candles with my family (we have a 2 1/2 year old, Philip), and it's different having Philip and my husband saying the blessings than it is saying them by myself. I don't know that my attachment to Judaism would even have happened if I had married earlier in my life.

Jill Schulman, 31, production manager for a pharmaceutical company; engaged to a Jewish man.

I grew up in a Conservative Jewish family, but my boyfriend for four years at college was Chris, a non-Jew. By the end of that relationship, I made a conscious decision that I would only date Jews.

After college, I had a hard time meeting Jewish men. I had to really make a special effort. By the time I turned 30, a good friend of mine tried to convince me to date this wonderful, non-Jewish guy. "What if you never meet a wonderful Jewish guy?" It was hard—there were years when I didn't have a close relationship.

My two brothers are married to Jews, and I see their children's family life. It's close, traditional—like my family was when I was growing up. Their families celebrate like

mine did when I was a kid. Their children are learning about Judaism like I did. I look at them and I realize I want that. I didn't want to have to give up on that.

With Chris I was naive—I thought it was easy; he'd convert;; it would work. But it's a very very big step to ask someone to convert. With Eric, my fiancé, we share the traditions in our home, holidays, our knowledge and feelings about the Holocaust; we saw "Schindler's List"together. With Eric I have all these things that I want. In college, I compromised on that vision. I didn't realize until I was older how important Judaism was to me.

Julia Nourock, 37, publisher of The Writing Self; married to a Jewish man.

I came from a very Jewishly assimilated home, and when I first met Scot, my husband, I worried that he was too Jewish. I also worried that I wasn't Jewish enough for Scot. I guess I wasn't comfortable with being Jewish at that time.

We met in a writing group; I actually met his story before I met him. I thought, 'I wonder if this guy is as nice as his story is.' On our first date we both had the sense that we had known each other forever, and all we had to do now is get the details.

Passover at Scot's family gave me a very mixed feeling. I had the unsettling sense that I was leaving my family and joining his, but it also was a way for me to get my identity back.

I have hopes that my infant daughter, Danielle, will be comfortable being female, and comfortable being Jewish. Scot and I both struggle with wanting to have more confidence and self-esteem. It's important for us to help Danielle have that, and her "self" is that she is female and that she is Jewish. We want her to value those two things.

Lisa Gold, 22, student at Brown University; currently with a Jewish partner.

I feel no imperative from my family to marry a Jew, but ultimately I think I would rather. My parents—Jewish, and divorced from each other—both remarried non-Jews. So I have both the intermarriage and the Jewish-Jewish models. (I was raised in a moderately Jewish family and had a bat mitzvah.) I've spent most of my romantic life with Jews, though I can't say I specifically went out looking for Jewish partners.

With another Jew, I feel a familiarity that I find attractive, a shared orientation in the world, a shared verbal style. With Ben, my current partner, we share a past of Jewish "forced" exposure—we joke about our Hebrew school truancy, rabbis who fell asleep. In the past, Passover has been really nice to "share" with Jewish partners—regardless of how disparate our Jewish pasts—as opposed to "showing" Jewish practice, as I have done in the past, to non-Jewish partners.

I know it's flawed and essentialist to claim there's a Jewish "way"—but I do feel a common language with some Jews; a mutual starting place. In terms of imagining my future children's religious education, it's more of a comfort to ask, 'Would I put my kids through that specific Jewish choice?' than ask, 'Will I educate my children Jewishly at all?'

I have a close Jewish friend in her forties, married to a non-Jew, whose kids go through weird, double-religious stuff—High Holidays, Christmas, Unitarian camp, no Hebrew School. It's a significant issue for her. It's loaded.

When I've gone to meet the families of Jewish partners, the fact that I'm Jewish is a real "opening." With non-Jews, I'm aware of being "the Jewish girlfriend"—it comes up all the time. I had one previous WASP boyfriend, and the differences between us always came down to me being Jewish and him being WASPy, even though often this was just implicit. I was the ethnic one, talkative, more outgoing. His family was formal, old money, blue blood.

Even on a physical level, with non-Jewish families of past partners, my appearance felt like an issue to me—I felt conscious of my ethnicity, my body hair, my dark coloring. I felt swarthier.

With Ben, we talk the same way—it's faster, "talky," savvy, witty. With non-Jewish partners, I've experienced talkers, too, but it's different. This is ridiculous, because there are tons of witty non-Jews. But, what can I say, there's still a hard-to-name Jewish overlay that's appealing to me; I seem to have a specific "Jewish standard."

Karen Prager, 24, graduate student in clinical psychology; engaged to a Jewish man.

I was brought up in an Orthodox home, and I was 18 when I met my first boyfriend, Greg. He was from Ohio—a real middle-America-Lutheran-blond-hair-blue-eyes guy. He had *wrestled* in high school, and he actually dropped the g's off his gerunds—walkin', talkin'. He lived across the hall from me in our freshman dorm at Harvard, and by the end of October he was my boyfriend—the first "real" one I'd ever had.

I told him I could never marry him. I told my mother, who had raised me with tales of her first and tragic love, Bill Howell (his name will always epitomize non-Jewishness to me), that I had a boyfriend. Who wasn't Jewish. She told me not to tell my father.

After we had been going out for four months, Greg told me he wanted to marry me. I told him that while I couldn't be sure that my husband would be Jewish (I couldn't believe I was actually saying that), I absolutely would raise my children as Jews. We talked "around" the question of conversion. Despite being Lutheran, Greg had gone to Catholic high school and was in the midst of a crisis of faith and identity. He didn't know if he could convert, and I knew that I couldn't give him an ultimatum. I felt it was too much to ask someone to give up their religion.

Greg started coming with me to Reform services at Hillel on Friday nights. I had been going to the Conservative egalitarian minyan, but as those services were conducted in Hebrew, we began going to Reform (some English, some Hebrew) together. Greg enjoyed the services, began to learn some of the songs, and told me that he thought Judaism would be a wonderful religion to raise children in.

Not that we were without our conflicts. On one disastrous night he told me that his father's family was from Germany. He related with pride stories of the German meat-packing plant that bore his own name, telling me that when his dad's family got together they all longed for a good Dresden ham, made according to the secret family recipe. Listening on the bottom bunk of his tiny bedroom, I burst into tears. How could I stay with him, I told him, when his grandparents might well have been Nazis during the Holocaust? I was inconsolable until he called his father, who assured us that the last of his family left Germany in the 1840s.

And so we were together. My mother eventually told my father what I was doing. While Greg sent me love letters, my father sent me letters enumerating the ways in which I was going against the Torah,

Keeping in mind that love fares better when we enter it knowing as much as possible about our identity, motivations, values, fantasies and fears, here are

SOME JEWISH QUESTIONS FOR A WOMAN TO ASK HERSELF BEFORE FALLING IN LOVE

(read the interviews above before you start asking)

by Susan Schnur

1) What are my best Jewish memories? What do I recall about Jewish aspects of my childhood, my grandparents, Jewish history?

2) When I say "I'm a Jew," what feelings are evoked in me? Do I feel centered? Proud? Embarrassed? Ashamed?

3) How was Jewish life viewed by my family when I was growing up? In what way do I think this affects my self-identity—and my Jewish identity—now?

4) To what groups or communities do I look for a sense of affiliation, roots, connection? Where do I think I'll be looking ten or fifteen years from now?

5) What are the causes that matter to me most? What motivates me to involve myself this way (for example, in women's issues, Zionism, gay rights, health, religious freedom, multicultural or environmental work, etc.)? Do I see my charity and volunteer involvement as expressions of Jewish values?

6) How much influence does the value system of a person I am close to have on my own? Are there strongly held points of view, opinions, attitudes that I would have a hard time appreciating or living by? When I'm getting to know a potential partner, is there anything in that person's beliefs or values that makes me cringe? Do I try to ignore these differences?

7) If I could shelve my parents' opinions, would my choices be different? In what ways are my values similar to those of my parents? In what ways different? In what way have I been influenced by my parents in a choice of mate?

8) If I'm someone who is just entering adult life, do I think of myself as "unfinished?" What might "finishing" entail?

9) Am I clear now about my ambitions and dreams and choices about future family life? What steps am I taking to put these into my life?

10) On a scale of 1 to 10, how important is it to me to identify myself or be known as a Jew? Does this influence who I hang around with? In what way?

11) What do I imagine myself—and those dear to me— doing ten years from now on Passover? Or even on Christmas?

12) What's it like to go to a Holocaust movie or to a Holocaust museum with the person I'm currently involved with? How does he/she react to an anti-Semitic joke at a party?

13) If the current object of my affections is a non-Jew, is his or her "differentness" attractive to me? If I project myself ten years into the future (maybe including kids), will this difference still be attractive?

14) When I go to a wedding, funeral, or birth ceremony, does it feel emotionally different to me if it's Jewish or not? How? When I plan my own family life, what Jewish elements feel important to me to incorporate? How will I present these to my children? Can I imagine raising children in a religion different from my own?

15) In what way has my level of Jewish knowledge made it easier—or harder—to imagine myself with a Jewish partner? If I knew more—or less—would that make a difference?

16) When I imagine the future, do I see myself as more assertive or less assertive than I am now about my own Jewish values, needs and dreams?

my family and myself.

I tried not to think about the future, but I couldn't help wondering how I would pay my tuition if I got disowned. I wondered what it would be like to get married in a judge's chambers without my family. But because my parents were so against my relationship with Greg, I myself didn't have to think about the tremendous conflicts we would have if we got married. Sometimes, though, unexpected friction would arise out of nothing. One day Greg and I walked past an Israel flag. "Look," I pointed, "there's the Jewish flag." "It's not the Jewish flag," he responded, a bit too quickly, "it's the Israeli flag. "Same thing," I said. He didn't think so.

Greg and I had fundamental differences in our world views, particularly about Israel and Zionism. To him, the United Nations' 'Zionism-is-racism' resolution proved that Zionism was indeed racism. To me, it proved that the U.N. was anti-Semitic. I couldn't believe his naiveté—I had been raised to believe that seemingly benign political powers could and would turn against the Jews; he had been raised with the idea that the U.N. was by definition just and good, as were the House, the Senate, and the Supreme Court.

"To my non-Jewish boyfriend, the U.N.'s 'Zionism-is-racism' resolution proved that Zionism was indeed racism. To me, it proved that the U.N. was anti-Semitic."

Greg and I broke up after he went to find himself in England on a junior year abroad. The religion issue was not at the forefront of our breakup, but it served as an undercurrent of unanswered questions and doubts about our future, becoming more problematic and demanding more attention the longer we stayed together. I left that relationship feeling certain that I would never date a non-Jew again—it just wasn't worth the pain I experienced with my parents and family.

Now I'm engaged to a man who is Jewish, but who was raised in a very assimilated, even anti-religious household. He was never given a Hebrew name. He didn't know that lobster wasn't kosher until he got to college, despite the fact that he grew up in a very Orthodox neighborhood in New York. And yet, he is accepted by my family. At times I still resent the arbitrariness of it—that Mark is allowed in my parents' house because of a seemingly meaningless pedigree. After all, I used to think, how different is he from Greg?

Very different, I have come to see. Mark was raised in a home where Yiddish was spoken, and, like me, has a Russian-born grandmother who calls jamvarenya. (True, his aunt bought ham for a picnic when we visited, but she served it on challah.) And Mark continues to surprise me. Once, at the zoo, he pointed to the goats, and said, "Look, a *veisse tzigeleh*"—Yiddish for white goat. I didn't even know that.

Mark has also started coming to shul with me on Friday nights. At first he was terrified, but he is beginning to feel more at home there. He has asked me to teach him *Shabbos* songs and *Pesach* songs so that when we spend holidays with my family he can join in. We have agreed that we will send our children to Jewish schools, at least through junior high. Mark has chosen a Hebrew name for himself, and sometimes we practice reciting the *Shabbos* blessings for wine and challah. It comes easily to him, because, somehow, he already knows the first few words—the phrase *"Barukh atah Adonai"* seems to be hardwired into his brain. I don't know where the "Ba*rukh atah Adonai"* came from, but it makes all the difference to me that it's there. ■

JUDY

BY JYL LYNN FELMAN

CHICAGO'S HOLOCAUST PROJECT

Although the artist Judy Chicago descends directly from 23 generations of rabbis (including the renowned 18th-century Vilna Gaon), she was raised in virtual ignorance of her people's culture, history and language. While the slaughter of six million Jews was taking place in Europe, Chicago's family celebrated Christmas in America, exchanging gifts in the midst of "raucous, festive parties."

Not until Chicago was 45 did she confront her own ignorance of both the Holocaust and of Judaism. That Christmas (1984), Chicago heard a poem by Harvey Mudd, a non-Jew, about the Holocaust. Stunned that a Gentile cared enough about the mass destruction of the Jews to actually write about it, Chicago felt shamed into her own awakening and compelled her to begin, along with her husband, photographer Donald Woodman, *The Holocaust Project,* an art installation that took six exhausting years to complete.

In historical scope, physical construction and personal vulnerability, the work is unlike any other art that Chicago has undertaken to date. Accompanying the exhibit (like Chicago's famous *Dinner Party*) is an unconventional text which includes photographs of the camps, preliminary sketches and fold-out color reproductions of the final work. Through journal entries, Chicago describes her personal quest towards reclaiming her identity as a Jew, as well as the artistic process involved in creating such a difficult exhibit.

While some of the writing is uninspired and lacks emotional depth, the color reproductions of the art are the exact opposite. Chicago's description of her severe emotional depression (arising from her immersion in the Holocaust material for the first time) lacks literary power. In one offensive entry (photo included) Chicago describes putting herself in the ovens of Auschwitz as if she were stepping into a new ride at a theme park. Unlike an astute cultural anthropologist studying her own people (like the renowned *Number Our Days* by Barbara Myerhoff), Chicago shows little respect for Jewish observances that she dislikes or finds anti-feminist. The journal—as opposed to the accompanying artwork—is, in the end, too much of everything and not enough of any one thing: the reader is privy to the problems of silk screening, combining oil painting with photography, how to make stained glass; the author's search for her Jewish identity; the uncovering of historical Holocaust information; and a travelogue of Germany, Poland, France, Russia and Israel.

What is significant about the journal, however, is the inclusion of the historical connections Chicago makes between women's oppression and Jewish oppression. She links the

The Holocaust Project: From Darkness To Light **by Judy Chicago with photography by Donald Woodman [Penguin Books, NY, NY, 1993 $22.50].**

burning of witches with the burning of Jews. She reaches for an understanding of genocide that places the Holocaust in a global context. While wrestling with the capitalistic objectification of animals and human beings, she finds similarities between the use of African-Americans as slaves on U.S. plantations and the use of Jews and other political prisoners as slaves in the work camps set up by Nazis in Eastern Europe.

Most compelling are the questions Chicago faces as an artist concerning the politics of representation: Can the Holocaust be artistically interpreted in any other form than photo-documentation? Will any rendering trivialize or romanticize individual suffering? How can one depict the Holocaust as the intentional genocide of Jews without denying the other victims: Communists, Gypsies, Gays and Lesbians [the latter two categories capitalized to assert their status as "nations"].

Judy Chicago

Chicago does not seek to answer any of her own questions. Instead, through the art itself, she tries to illustrate all the victims while retaining a place for Jewish specificity in the overall design of the installation. Throughout the creation of the exhibit, Chicago worries that the images she's uncovering are too horrific to translate into art; and once translated; she's afraid that the audience will look away. Perhaps, though, it is Chicago herself who looks away from the images she wants so badly to create.

In the panel *Double Jeopardy*, the painted figures of human beings are plump and do not jibe with corresponding journal entries and photographs depicting starvation and humiliation, overworked and tortured bodies. And in the panels *Pink Triangles/Torture*, about gays and lesbians, the images are surreal; bodies are shaped in a pink triangle surrounded by beds of pansies that Chicago discovered were actually planted at the camps by gay men.

In representing atrocities, Chicago is faced with the challenge of the literal image versus the risk of the non-literal. Chicago is at her innovative best in a new style—combining photography, sprayed acrylic, and oil painting applied to a surface called photolinen. In one of the most terrifying panels (*Banality of Evil/Struthof*), Chicago paints Nazis—drinking beer and celebrating at a countryside pub right outside the camps—on to a photograph of people being herded into the gas chambers to die. In another photo-painting (*Banality of Evil/Then and Now*), Chicago juxtaposes a Nazi family playing in the front yard of their cottage, smoke rising from burning ovens in the background, against a white American family living in suburbia, barbecuing in their front yard as a nuclear power plant stands poised in the background.

Two serious questions remain unanswered in relation to the execution of *The Holocaust Project*. One, involving the ethics of collaborative work, follows Chicago from installation (*The Dinner Party and The Birth Project*) to installation. Many women, and a few men, donate hours, weeks, even years of their time and talent to assist Chicago in the construction of her artwork.

Expert weavers took almost the entire six years to complete the woven panels of *The Holocaust Project*. Chicago admits that no one is paid, but she offers no explanation for how so many people can afford to work for free. She does say that she and her husband work without a salary, and that all funding comes from private sources. But we never know how much things cost or where, exactly, the money comes from. Furthermore, Chicago and Woodman travelled to Israel and Eastern Europe on private donations, while none of her volunteers were invited along.

Chicago's unwillingness to wrestle directly with fundamental questions of privilege inherent in undertaking such a comprehensive and time-consuming art installation as *The Holocaust Project* contrasts sharply with her otherwise meticulous approach to her work.

Finally, the last panel, *Rainbow Shabbat*, a 54-inch by six-foot stained glass, captures both Chicago's strengths and weaknesses. The panel, a painting of a traditional Sabbath meal, shows Arabs, Jews, Vietnamese, Africans and Anglos sitting with their arms around each other, heads turned towards the head of the table where an Orthodox Jewish woman lights the candles. At the other end of the table, the woman's husband says kiddush, the prayer over wine.

The diners are bathed in a rainbow of stained glass, as though the meal occurs in a grand, medieval cathedral. Is this "dinner party" a failure of imagination, or a romantic, glossy version of Chicago's worldview?

By ending the exhibit with a "Family of Man"-type portrait (complete with husband, wife and multicultural, ecumenical progeny), the viewer is forced to wonder if Chicago's solution to intentional mass extermination of Jews, Gypsies, Homosexuals and Communists is the recreation of the nuclear family. The *Rainbow Shabbat* makes no sense as the final Holocaust panel.

Clearly, Chicago was afraid to close without a "happy ending." Ultimately Chicago's fear of leaving the viewer with an ambiguous, unresolved image weakens the overall power the *The Holocaust Project*. ■

Jyl Lynn Felman, an attorney and short story writer, lectures widely on racism, antisemitism and homophobia. Most recently she is the author of Hot Chicken Wings, *a collection of Jewish short fiction, which was a 1993 Lambda Literary Finalist.*

The Holocaust Project: From Darkness Into Light will be traveling to numerous museums including:

- **Laguna Gloria Art Museum**, Austin TX, October 1994—January 1994
- **Rose Art Museum Brandeis University**, Waltham MA, October 1995—December 1995
- **Hebrew Union College Skirball Museum**, Los Angeles, CA, December 1996—May 1997

For more information contact Ron Longe, Senior Publicist (212) 366-2752

THRU A FEMINIST LENS:

JOAN ROTH PHOTOGRAPHS A WORLD OF JEWISH WOMEN

SID KAPLAN

Over the last 10 years, I've gone on over 40 trips to Jewish communities in Ethiopia, Yemen, Israel, Morocco, India, Buchara, Ukraine, Hungary, Romania and Bulgaria. I almost always travel alone.

On occasion I travel with a translator. Once in a while I have a benefactor, but usually I take on small jobs back in New York to subsidize my shoestring trips, like I sell photographic prints, or I get small grants.

The scariest thing, traveling alone, is feeling safe. Most photographers have their itineraries all planned, but I never know ahead of time what I'm going to do, who I'll meet, whether I'll even meet any Jews. If I do meet Jews, will they be receptive to me or rejecting? How will they perceive me as a woman traveling alone?

Very often I have to ask Jewish men for permission to photograph. In Yemen, the men asked me, "Why do you want to photograph our wives, and not us?" In Buchara, the men were also puzzled—why didn't I photograph people, instead of women? I think I inspire women when they see me, a 51-year-old woman, traveling alone.

My children, two daughters, are grown now. I started my traveling once they left for college. It would have been nice to have started this career earlier, but. . . what can I say? When I was 18, I came to New York from Detroit because I wanted to be in the theater. But my parents said, "Either get married or come home." So I got married. My husband (from whom I've been divorced twenty years) also said to me, "You can go to New York School of Dramatic Arts, or you can marry me. Choose." While I was changing diapers (which I loved, but I also wanted to be in film or theater school), my male cousin who is exactly my age (and is a close friend) was at NYU film school, and then was becoming a successful filmmaker. It felt terribly unfair.

So I had to learn my craft the old way, by apprenticing here and there, in dribs and drabs, finding one inspiring teacher, and then another. I was always interested in women's issues, so my first project, in the early '70s, was an exhibit and a book called "Shopping Bag Ladies of New York." Over the course of eight years, I got to know these women who lived on the street. I prepared a report on homeless women for the Manhattan Bowery Project—my work was really the start of consciousness around the issue of homelessness. One of the homeless women, Maggie, I "adopted." The police were about to kick her

out of Central Park, so I said, "Stop. I'm going to take care of her." My partner Lenny and I got her (and her ten dogs) an apartment. We still subsidize Maggie's apartment. She came to my daughter's wedding.

After photographing the women's movement for many years, my Jewishness began to rekindle. In 1983, at a Sabbath dinner at a friend's, I heard about the plight of Ethiopian Jews and I said, "I have to go there." It seemed like a chance to go back into biblical times visually. The woman sitting next to me said, "I know how you can do it," and she connected me up with some people on a rescue mission.

Since then I've photographed Jewish women everywhere.

1

2

Lenny is a wholesale distributor, and he couldn't travel with me. But even if he could have, it wouldn't have worked. I would have paid attention to him, and my work wouldn't have been as focused.

I have a "feel" for a Jewish face—I look for a piece of myself in each woman I photograph. A Jewish face, to me, speaks of the whole Jewish experience. Each of these women could be me, my grandmother, an ancestor, my daughter.

I was given courage long ago by Lisette Model, an extraordinary photography teacher of mine. She told me, "Darling, if you don't wake up and SEE, you're going to miss your whole life." When I'm feeling shy and fearful about traveling, I think of Lisette saying, "It's easier to do something then to try to do something."

I had just gotten to Odessa, and was walking down this street and I saw all these brides milling around in front of a building. "What's this?" I asked. I was told it was a "wedding house." At that time in Russia, there were no religious weddings—everyone had these ten minute civil ceremonies, one after another, in this great big house.

So I walk into the building, hoping to find a Jewish bride (1). I didn't know how likely it would be to find a Jew, but God was on my side, and brought me this most beautiful 18 year old. I liked everything about her—she seemed so Jewish and so Russian at the same time. I loved her hair. Her dress felt like something my grandmother would have worn. I liked everything.

At some point I asked, "Are you Jewish?" That's always hard for me to ask. But, anyway, there's something that always gives it away—the way they talk, I'm not sure what. So I just attached myself to this bride and her retinue. I followed her into the little room where the "official" photographer took her photo, and then I went with the two families up these grand carpeted, marble stairs to the room where the ceremony was. Under a huge picture of Lenin, a civil servant (wearing a big medal) held a stick and pointed at the line on a document where the couple had to sign.

At the end I asked, "Are you having a party? Can I come?" At a certain point it becomes natural for me to ask to be included, because I empathize so much with whomever I'm photographing. I'm really having a good time, and I feel I'm catching up with some history—my father never talked about his childhood or his shtetl, and it was understood that we children were not to ask.

The wedding party was really joyous. At the end the grandmother, who was a great dancer, invited me to spend the night. She cooked me delicious Russian pancakes for breakfast, and read to me in Russian from her childhood diary. I couldn't understand the words, but she read and cried, read and cried.

JOAN ROTH PHOTOGRAPHS A WORLD OF JEWISH WOMEN

The first thing I did in Bucharest was go to the synagogue on *shabbos* and introduce myself to Rabbi Rosen. He gave me his "blessing," as it were, to photograph the community. After services, everyone—maybe 50 of us—walked up the street to this kosher lunch hall run by the Joint Distribution Committee. It turns out there were no restaurants in Bucharest where I was willing to eat—the food had this frightening quality—so I ended up eating three meals a day at the kosher lunch hall. It was really good food, and cheap.

So one day I'm finishing up lunch and in comes Seidy Gluck (2). How could you miss her? Such personality and exuberance all over this face. Well, she was "Seidy Gluck." I had such a feeling about her—she was something! I sat down and ate lunch again.

It turned out it was Seidy's birthday, she was 75, and she was feeling very lonely. Her husband had died; she was sad. She invited me to her house, it took over an hour to get there. Bucharest is polluted, ugly, congested—concrete slab high-rises, windswept, lots of unfinished buildings; everything beautiful has been torn down. The city feels like it was reconstructed without people in mind. And Seidy's days were spent just getting in and out of the city for lunch—the kosher kitchen also gave her dinner to take home.

It turns out that Seidy Gluck was the former star of the Yiddish theater, a Romanian Molly Picon. Yiddish theater was born in Romania. I spent all afternoon with Seidy, I was fascinated, I was madly in love with her. She took out her old albums—stage and family albums, theater posters—I was trying to explain to her how valuable these posters are, original theater posters. She was feeling that her time had passed. I felt so honored; I was in the front row. I was a great audience. Seidy didn't have a lot of days like this one.

3

In Budapest I found out about this Jewish cultural event—an evening of Jewish poetry and music. So I went, and while I was there I met a therapist, a Holocaust survivor, who is well-known for her work with other Holocaust survivors. She told me about a client of hers, someone very important to her, who lived in another town far away. So I got on a train and knocked on this client's door.

4

As we talked, this "client" took a big yellow Jewish star from a drawer—she was very proud of it—and pinned it on her blouse (3). It turns out she had worn this star in front of the Hungarian Parliament, and had tried to immolate herself—she was ready to die to protest the invisibility of Holocaust survivors. But the police grabbed her, and took her away to a mental hospital, and it was there that she first met her therapist.

Part of this woman's therapy (she's doing very well now) is to go to this nursing home every day where she feeds this old woman, with such love, as if she were her mother (4). The old woman is a Holocaust survivor, too. Neither woman has any family, no children, no siblings, no cousins, no spouses. It was both beautiful and painful to see this old woman, so frail and thin in her bed. To see these two women together—the beauty we can create in the world. These two were reconstructing a missing love; it's not so simple to do.

In this photo the younger woman was being a little stern so that the older woman would eat. After lunch the younger woman put the older one back in bed, and then she cradled the old woman's cheeks in her hands, and kissed her forehead.

5

I went to Kiev in 1991 because it was the 50th anniversary of Babi Yar. For a long time, Jews weren't even allowed to visit the site. This was the first time that the government allowed an official memorial service.

Thousands of Jews, a huge sea of people carrying candles and flowers, all walked from the train station to Babi Yar—the same route as half a century ago. There was a blown-up photo at the site, of naked women. It never occurred to me that you had to take your clothes off to be shot. I've never been able to get that photo out of my mind.

Everyone there had a mother, a father, a grandparent or some relative who was murdered at Babi Yar. This woman [center of photo] (5) was a survivor, one of only four or five. She was thrown into the canyon as a child, and somehow crawled out. She crawled to the house of non-Jews she knew. Here she poses with these non-Jews, brother and sister; she was brought up with them. The three of them are together a lot. They were moved that I thought it was important to photograph them—so they're crying. Still in pain after all these years.

After I visited Babi Yar, I went to synagogue in Kiev. That's where I started this kind of prayer I say—to my grandfather, to God—thanking my grandfather for having had the courage to leave Russia. My aunt used to tell me how beautiful Kiev was, the cherry blossoms in spring. She used to say, "If I had stayed, it would have been so easy for me to become a doctor," and I used to think, "What are you talking about, you'd be dead."

This great, maniac driver in Kiev—I'd gotten him through the synagogue there— took me to the village my father came from: Tarascha, near Kiev. It's a really pretty town on a creek, with a big farmer's market. It's a tiny town, with an expansive feel. We were just driving up and down little streets—I knew I had a great-uncle who didn't come to America: I wanted to

6

find a house, a family, a grave, something with my family name, Altman. I didn't really expect to find an Altman, it was just kind of an exercise in possibilities. A hunch.

I don't know why I yelled "Stop!" to my driver when I saw this woman standing by her house (6). I thought she looked Jewish, and it turned out she was. I said to her, "Do you know any Altmans?" and she said, "Yes." She went into her house to get her sweater and scarf, and I took this photo as she came back out—running to take me to the Altmans'. It turned out they lived at the end of the block.

So the Altman family and I (and this woman) spent all afternoon together. Their great-grandfather was a rabbi; so was mine. The Altmans had been noted Torah scholars in the village; I had heard that, too, from my brother. They took out lots of photos, but it was hard. My driver translated; I imagined we were related, but I didn't really know; they didn't really know. There were too many missing pieces, too much lost, too much forgotten.

At the end of the visit, I walked this woman back home and said good-bye. I'm not good at good-byes—I never think it's the final moment. Well, I guess it's not the final moment, since I get to see everyone again—all the time—in my photos. Isn't she adorable? She's a real part of my heart.

From Moscow I flew to Tashkent in Uzbekistan, over seven hours. There I met a friend's cousin named Ahuva; we drove four hours to Samarikand, and then on to Buchara. There's still a Jewish ghetto in Buchara—these wonderful little curved streets. Each house is surrounded by a stucco wall, and has a gate and an enclosed courtyard.

I don't know why, but I was haunted by this question: "Are there any witches in Buchara?" It was a ridiculous question, but I thought, I've come all the way here, what the heck. So I asked someone, and they said, "Oh, yes." In my wildest dreams, I never expected to find this lady

with fire and a knife (7).

Ahuva and I visited the witch in her little shed in her enclosed yard; outside in the courtyard, other customers were waiting for their turn. Ahuva and I go into the shed—there's this closet full of mysterious rags, bottles with things on shelves, bags full of things, a trunk full of things.

Ahuva tells the witch that she has a headache. In this photo, the woman has just covered Ahuva's head with a rag, and she's taking a knife and

JOAN ROTH PHOTOGRAPHS A WORLD OF JEWISH WOMEN

poking Ahuva's forehead with it several times, then swinging this torch around Ahuva's head. Ahuva says, "It worked." Then the healer does my head, too. I didn't have a headache, but it felt good, who knows?

The witch told me: "My magic comes from the highest sources—God and my mother."

Zoli—she's in her 50's, but she looks older; with gold teeth. She's like the "Caterer of Buchara." This is no small task, since Bucharan Jews have a celebration every night, with a minimum guest list of 300 "close" family members. I love Buchara very much; it's such a *freilach* community, lots of spirit, strong family life; they've kept so much tradition.

So I'm wandering around the Jewish ghetto and I see this door—I would just pop into people's homes—something about Zoli's doorway seemed friendly. This kitchen (Zoli has two) is outside in her courtyard; stone floor, an outdoor oven. She chops all her meat with this ax. From a whole side of cow, she makes the most delicious little kreplach; they're phenomenal. And all with an ax.

The skirt she's wearing here—(8) all the women in Buchara seem to have the same clothing; it's as if one huge bolt of cloth arrived in town and everyone made something out of it the same day.

Well it turned out that I spent lots and lots of time with Zoli, and went to many of her "catering events." I even returned to Buchara from the U.S. for Zoli's daughter's wedding. Zoli looked very glamorous at the wedding. She's a great dancer, the life of the party.

You might not think of her as attractive—you know, she's not like a movie star—but she's the one. She's so dynamic, such strength. She doesn't just cook for the town, she fixes women who faint, she comes forward in every crisis, she takes care of the community, she feeds husbands, sons, sons-in-law, she keeps the peace, she makes everything from scratch.

I got to the point where I showed up at Zoli's house regularly around lunch time— I wanted to eat all the food of hers that I could. She's the one.

In Tashkent, the women and men are buried in separate cemeteries—with engraved portraits; (9) it's beautiful. I've never seen any of this anywhere else. I really liked the visual feeling of all these women together; there was enormous energy, a feeling of women's power—it took their deaths to get them this room of their own. It's like a little museum—it connects you up.

But I wondered about the women who had been married a long time—how did they feel being separated from their husbands?

One of the things I like best about my partner Lenny is his cemetery plot. I met Lenny just after his mother died, and we went together to her unveiling. It was in a beautiful cemetery on Long Island, with lots of room. I asked Lenny if I could be buried there, too—the idea that our souls would be together forever seems quite nice to me.

Lenny said yes, but we had to ask his mother, and we haven't gotten there yet. This was only, like, ten years ago.

Looking at this photograph, I think—it's funny what becomes important to you as you get older. ■

Joan Roth's photographs are currently on exhibit (through August) at Mizel Museum in Denver. During the spring of 1995, her work moves to Brandeis University. She is also publishing a book of over 100 of her photographs. To order, call the Jewish Women Project, 212-628-8160.

Wearing My Jewish Star

BY SUSAN J. GORDON

I haven't worn my Star of David since I was in high school years ago. Now, I've started wearing it again.

I've always preferred to be private about my religion. When I was a child, my family name didn't "sound" Jewish, and people always said I didn't "look it." That was fine with me; what I was was nobody's business. Besides, virtually everyone was Jewish in our neighborhood; gentiles were "different," not us. Things changed, however, when I was 14, and my family and I moved to a religiously mixed community. In my new high school, many teenage girls wore gold religious crosses, which bounced and glittered against their pastel-colored sweater sets.

"I want a Jewish star," I told my parents. For the first time in my life, I felt like an outsider. Wearing a Star would be my quiet way of saying I was Jewish. Now I realize not only did I need to identify my religion to my classmates, I also needed to identify myself to me.

Other Jewish friends recount similar stories of adolescent interest in religious trappings. Interconnected with the desire to establish our independence from our families was the need to assert our identities, as well as the deep-rooted realization that no matter what we did or said, the rest of the world would always see us as Jews.

I wore my star throughout high school, and put it away when I entered college. By then, I was more secure in my self-concept, and didn't need a visible symbol to tell people who I was. For a long time, my star remained inside my jewelry box, next to other cherished pieces I don't wear anymore but would never throw away.

Today, I've taken out my star again, but unlike those people who always wear religious jewelry, I remain conflicted and ambivalent. Wearing a Jewish star in temple is one thing; wearing it to a Christmas party or job interview is something else. ("Tuck it inside," says a small voice in my head, "and you won't make trouble for yourself.")

Now I sometimes wear my star for my original reason—to respond to all the crosses I see. This year, crosses have become a major fashion statement. Designers such as Donna Karan string them on jet black rosary-like chains, and an upscale department store catalog proclaims that "the new accessory of merit is the cross."

A Christian friend tells me she's offended by this crass commercialization because it debases her serious religious feelings. She also wonders—"Do Jews buy this jewelry? How do they feel about wearing a cross?" I hope they'd hate it. People who put on glitzy oversized crosses and think they're just being "fashionable" are wrong. I'm angry with retailers and fashion designers who think it's okay to take anything—no matter how sacred—and turn it into something money-making and tasteless.

My filigreed Star of David hangs from a fine gold chain. Sometimes I wear it so people can see it; other times I wear it for the comfort it gives me. I tuck it inside my blouse and like amulets worn since ancient times, it's my little secret, sending out invisible rays of protection.

Wearing My Pink Triangle/Jewish Star

BY H. HADAR

I take off my Jewish star earring and slip it into my pocket. This isn't about antisemitism—I'm entering the Jewish Federation building where I work part-time. This is about homophobia—the earring has an enamelled pink triangle overlapping the Jewish star.

I don't need to wear jewelry which says that I am a woman, that I am white or that I am young—these are visible aspects of my identity. Being a Jew, and being a lesbian, these are identities which are not as visible, identities which can be denied or hidden. Wearing my "identity jewelry"—my Jewish stars, my labryses, pink triangles, double women symbols—is a conscious choice of identifying myself to the world, of making myself visible.

Visibility is about pride. I always felt proud wearing my Jewish star, but when I first came out as a lesbian, I was too scared to wear my pink triangle outside of the lesbian community. As my lesbian self-loving and pride grew, I became more confident wearing my lesbian jewelry around town.

Visibility is also about safety. I rarely remove my Jewish stars, but there are times when I will take off or hide my lesbian jewelry. I don't always feel safe being a lesbian in the world—I fear the threat of harassment, of violence and discrimination. Even within the "progressive" Jewish community, the message is often "a good lesbian is a closeted one." Choosing to be visible as a lesbian is always a calculated risk.

But visibility is about risk-taking, too. Often I wear my jewelry as a symbol of difference—in lesbian crowds I'll wear my Jewish jewelry, and in Jewish crowds I'll wear my lesbian jewelry. "Don't assume we are all the same," my jewelry whispers. Sometimes I wear the symbols even when I'm not comfortable doing so, because I want to make a political statement, to push the boundaries and push buttons.

As small as it may seem, these Jewish stars interwoven with pink triangles and women symbols are, in fact, small hammers working away at the stereotypes, at the antisemitism and at the homophobia. And one of these days, I'm going to be able to step beyond my fear, and wear my triangle into the Jewish Federation building. ■

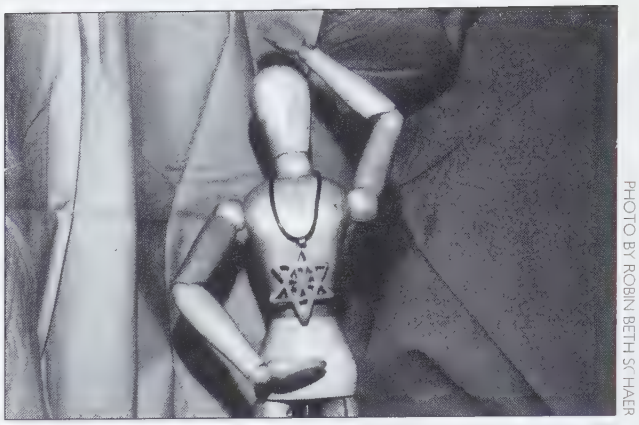

PHOTO BY ROBIN BETH SCHAER

Ethiopian Jewish Star

"When do you feel particularly Jewish?" asks my rabbi, encouraging my study group to reflect on living in a predominantly Christian society.

"When I'm with a group of people and everyone's Jewish," I realize. "And when I'm with a group and no one's Jewish but me. And . . . when I'm wearing my Jewish star."

Wearing it in public, of course, can be risky. You wear your star on a public bus and somebody shoves you; is that why? . . . or you argue with a dishonest shopkeeper, see him look at your star and know he's probably thinking, Humph! She's Jewish, so no wonder she's haggling and complaining about the price!

Not long ago, as I packed for a two-week trip to Europe, I debated if I should take my star. Should I be wearing it in airports? In foreign countries, where who knew who might be looking at me? Okay, I thought, I'll wear it inside my clothing, private and safe, and just for me. But feelings of comfort couldn't compete against deeper gut-level fears of being identified, and putting myself at unnecessary risk.

This fear of being "found out" to be a Jew is, unfortunately, very old and very real. Even if you don't announce your "Jewishness," you're always at risk for being "found out." I thought about Islamic terrorists singling out Jewish hostages on captured airplanes, and Jews I knew who owned two passports—one filled with customs stamps from Israel, and the other for the rest of the world. Paradoxically, at the same time talismans are supposed to be protecting us, they also can expose us to potential harm.

That doesn't stop me from wearing my star, although I do pick and choose when and where this happens. For the past few years, I've been volunteering at an after-school tutoring center for homeless children. Most of the children are black. None are Jews. According to a recent survey by the Anti-Defamation League of B'nai B'rith, more than a third of all American blacks are strongly anti-Semitic. The less educated, the more prejudiced they are likely to be. With so many tensions existing between

blacks and Jews today, it's no longer enough for me to be "just" a volunteer. Some of the families were evicted from houses owned by Jewish landlords, but how many Jews do these kids actually meet? They already know I care about them. Now I also want them to know that I'm Jewish. Wearing my Star of David is my silent way of telling them.

When I was growing up, my parents were divorced, and that made me "different" enough. All I wanted was to blend in. But the homeless kids I tutor can't do this. In some ways, their black skin is their "star;" it's an undeniable thing that they can't remove.

But—I don't see their color anymore. They're not black kids. They're just kids to me. Our colors "reappear" when we go outside the building. Walking down the street, we are a distinctive group. Passersby barely notice me, but the children are "those black kids from the welfare hotel."

"These homeless children already know I care about them; now I also want them to know that I'm Jewish."

Considering how bleak and sad their lives have been, most of the children are remarkably resilient. Their young eyes are still soft-looking and gentle, and are not hardened with anger at the system which lets them down. There is still time for me to make a difference in their lives.

I have been wearing my star to the tutoring center every week; for quite a while, no one said anything about it. Then a little girl was interested. She touched it gently and asked me what it was.

"It's something Catholics wear," said her big brother right away.

"No way," said his friend, shaking his head. "It's a Jewish star, right?"

I nodded and smiled.

"Are you Jewish?" they asked.

"Yes," I replied.

And that was it. No great conversation; just an acknowledgment. So even if we never talk more about it, I hope they will remember me and my star. Their mothers notice it, when they drop by the center. We chat for a while and they glance at my star. And although nothing is said, something has been said after all. ■

Susan J. Gordon, a freelance writer living in White Plains, NY, writes for many national magazines.

The Jewish Star in History—Not Always Jewish

From as early as the Bronze Age, the six-pointed star was used as a magical sign in many civilizations, in regions as far apart as Mesopotamia and Britain. During the Second Temple period (until 70 C.E.), the hexagram was used by Jews and non-Jews alike alongside the pentagram (the five-pointed star). In the synagogue of Capernaum in Israel (2nd or 3rd century C.E.), it is found side by side on a frieze with a pentagram and a swastika.

Through the Middle Ages, it appears both in synagogues, and in Byzantine and European churches. As a talisman, it became common in many magical versions of the mezuzah between the 10th and 14th centuries. Still, it had no general Jewish connotation.

Between 1660 and 1770, it was incorporated into the coats of arms of several Italian families, both Jewish and non-Jewish. As an alchemical symbol (which did not influence Jewish circles), it began to be used in the later 17th century to denote the harmony between the antagonistic elements of water and fire.

It wasn't until the 19th century, however, that the hexagram began to be used specifically (and widely) Jewishly—this is because Jews were looking for a striking and simple sign which would "symbolize" Judaism in the same quick way that the cross symbolized Christianity. (By 1799, the star had already appeared as a specific Jewish sign in a satirical anti-Semitic engraving.) In 1822, it was used on the Rothschild family coat of arms when the Austrian emperor raised the family to nobility.

From growing general use, the six-pointed star was taken over by the Zionist movement, connoting new hopes and a new future for the Jewish people. When the Nazis used it as a badge of shame which was to accompany millions on their way to death, it took on a new dimension of depth, uniting suffering and hope.

—adapted from *The Encyclopedia Judaica*

The Strength of Tamar

The original story of Tamar is found in Genesis 38. In accordance with the custom of levirate marriage [see Deuteronomy 25, 5-6], a widow, in this case Tamar, must marry an unmarried brother of her late husband. The firstborn son of such a marriage is considered the progeny of the first (dead) husband. The word *onanism,* meaning masturbation or *coitus interruptus* (and implying selfish gratification), derives from the Onan of this narrative.

BY INGRID HUGHES

Judah was tender with Hagar the winter she was sick. Her flesh shrank from her bones and her eyes burned, avid and angry. He carried her from her tent himself and set her on her pillows under the olive trees, holding her hand as she muttered. Her life had been cruel, she said. She had brought forth three sons, and two of them had died before her. If she caught sight of me, she would say, "It's the fault of that one that I have no grandchildren."

"Hagar, that's not just," Judah would say. For a moment he would look aside, then his whitening eyes might rest on my breasts before he lifted his chin and pointed his beard towards my father's tents on the other side of the spring, to send me back home.

I would slip away, furious and crying. Didn't she see that I too was bereft? She had lain with a man, born children, held them to her breasts. She was a woman of rank, to whom others deferred, whose husband was tending her even as she lay dying. No such fortune had been mine. I was nobody's wife and nobody's mother, forever at the fringes, waved away. Yet it had all been promised me by Judah, when his eyes were clear and he picked me out for his first son, picked me for my beauty and my virtues and my strength to continue the royal line. "She's good-natured," he had said, telling my parents why he wanted me. "She will accept the will of the Mighty One." He knew this because I had grown up at his feet, where my brothers and sisters and cousins all scrambled in the sand with his sons, within the moving circle of tents.

So Judah chose me for Er, who was so handsome I could hardly look

WOODCUTS BY BARRY MOSER, FROM *THE SONG OF SONGS* BY MARCIA FALK (1993)
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in his face, son of the chieftain, seed of Jacob. I agreed, my parents settled on the bride price, and I was ready. My mother and father took me to Judah's tents and gave me to Er.

That evening as we all feasted, Er's eyes were on me, eager and excited. Then they danced away, then danced back. My gaze clung to them, dark pools I wanted to enter. I waited impatiently for everyone else to go so we could have our time together. But when we entered our tent, his palm was wet and his skin almost gray. His nails were blue as well. Terrified, I watched him lie down helplessly, shuddering and thrashing. His eyes found mine for one last moment, and then closed. I ran from the tent screaming, and his parents came. All night they sat with him, and before dawn he stopped breathing. While they kept vigil I clung to the girl who had been given me as my maid, Rebecca. We rocked together while his mother wailed that the mighty one was cruel, and Judah paced and cried. After Er was buried, in the morning, I cried, too, even more frightened than saddened by my loss.

We mourned and mourned. Why? His mother used to ask. Nobody could answer her. We all knew Er must have done something terrible for his life to end that way. Usually He takes the lives of the old, or warriors, or babies whose breath is still uncertain. Rarely does He take a healthy youth. "My son was a good man," Hagar would yell, up towards the heavens. "Why am I suffering when other mothers' sons thrive?"

Judah often went to walk in the fields and one morning he returned and found us sitting outside the tents under the tree while Hagar ranted. He sat down and placed his large hand on her neck. "We must accept this. It's not right to resist the Mighty One," he said sadly. I respected him because he could see beyond himself and his pain.

"This is my decision," he said. "Onan will be Tamar's husband." I turned to Onan, fearing something would go wrong again. During the weeks of mourning he had been silent and remote, as indeed he had been all the years we were growing up. Then he used to play by himself, scratching in the sand with a stick, piling stones into shapes which he told us other children he couldn't explain, we wouldn't understand.

This time there was no feasting. We were lying together already, when he asked me, "Do you want to have my child?"

"Yes," I said. "I want a child."

"But it won't be mine, it will be my brother's. I only got you because my seed is the seed of Judah, son of Jacob," he said bitterly. He put his hand on my bare breast. "You weren't chosen for me. You didn't agree to marry me."

"Your brother was never my husband," I said.

"I want my own wife and my own son," he said.

"I hadn't known Er when he died. I will be your wife."

"You are very beautiful." He kissed me then, and I began to feel easier. But when he thrust into me again and again I was in pain and I wanted him to stop. Soon he reared back and pulled himself from within me so that his seed spilled on the ground.

"Why did you do that?" I knew this was wrong. And now I couldn't conceive a child.

"I had to," he said. "I can't be the ram brought in to the best ewe. I will be myself, Onan, no matter what." He got up and put his robes on and went outside into the cold night. I cried with disappointment and dread, knowing something bad must happen. In the morning they found his body, bitten by a small snake as he walked in the night, the snake crushed in his fist.

I had to tell Judah what had happened before his death. "Poor girl," Judah said, and put his arm on my shoulder. I held on to his warm body, comforting and sturdy, and he began to sob. He let go of me and went to tell Hagar. This time we knew what the wickedness was. Again we talked of what had happened before, to Er, and Hagar asked me over and over if I knew why he had died. Sometimes Judah asked me too. I also was frightened that the deaths of two of his sons were connected to me.

"I didn't know Er," I said each time they questioned me. "He was your son."

Finally Judah said, "Go back to your father's tents and remain a widow till little Shelah is old enough to marry you, if the Almighty is willing."

My maid Rebecca went with me to my father's. "Poor Tamar," she would say, referring to the loss of first one and then a second husband. I never told her how I worried that the Mighty One was against me.

My older brother's wife had a new baby at the breast, though her first son was almost ready to take a wife. The baby looked into the eyes of my sister-in-law, and she looked into his, as I had looked into Er's during the night of feasting. As this baby grew he still came to her, tugged at her robes till she opened them, and held one of his hands to her breast while he sucked. My breasts would burn with longing at the sight.

As the men whistled and propositioned me, I said to myself, 'I'm not selling my body, I'm getting my due.'

"Go away now," she would say to me, seeing my eyes. Banished, I would go behind the tents and stroke my breasts, but my skin burned more, and I grew more hungry, not less.

"Tamar stares at me too much," my brother's wife told him. He frowned at me, not knowing what to say. By now they rarely remembered my sorrow; I was an extra helper, little different than my Rebecca, my most frequent companion, except that Rebecca had married a shepherd and was a mother herself, so that often it was I who helped her. She at least didn't forbid me to look at her with longing, though sometimes she said, "Tamar, you pain me. Here, take the child." I would hold her daughter, but I couldn't comfort her cries.

Now years had passed, Rebecca had five children, and Hagar was an old woman, dying, with no grandchildren. Judah had not kept his promise that Shelah would beget my children. I put myself in his way on the path to the spring.

"Judah, I am growing older," I said, as he came near. He nodded his covered head with silent formality, as if he had already considered this and set it aside, and continued down the hill with a determined stride. He had decided to forget me, let me live my life without the daily wheat and honey of husband or children, without ties to connect me to others. I was bitter. How could I get him to keep his promise?

Judah had never taken a concubine, perhaps because the sorrow of their dead sons bound him to Hagar. When Hagar was gone he would be full of lust. Once in my childhood when we traveled by the gates of a strange village, a woman had been sitting alone on a rock, her face veiled, talking to the men who went by. I was startled, because she had nothing to sell, so what could she talk to strangers about? My mother said she was a harlot, who sold her own body, as the Egyptians did.

"Why?" I asked. My mother had told me there was always a reason for wickedness.

"Maybe her family all died and she is alone."

Remembering that woman, I decided that after Hagar's death, I would take off the mourning I had promised to wear as the widow of

Judah's sons, dress like that harlot, and sit outside the gates of Enaim on the road I knew Judah would take to the sheep shearing in the spring.

I explained this to Rebecca, for I would need her help. She gasped when I told her what I meant to do. "You must wait for Shelah. He's grown tall and handsome, old enough to marry. Judah promised him to you, everyone knows that."

I shook my head. "Judah never speaks to me. He's not keeping his promise."

"Go to Shelah yourself," she said. "Tell him he's your husband, he's been promised to you."

I shook my head. "Shelah won't do it. Judah would be too angry."

"If Shelah won't anger Judah, who are you to dare?"

"I am more desperate than Shelah. Let Judah be angry. Let the Almighty strike me down. Better than living my life like this."

"But Judah will punish you. You can't shame his family publicly."

"I can do whatever I make up my mind to do. He broke his promise to me," I said, and went to sit by myself under a palm tree.

I was afraid. First of the Mighty One. Er and Onan had died for their wickedness. Rebecca was right, I might be killed too. Besides, my desire was to bear the children I was meant to have. The Almighty wouldn't strike me down for carrying out His instruction to be fruitful, which Judah himself should be minding. I was in the right. I knew that. I would go ahead with my plan.

Hagar died. Judah and Shelah buried her. The weeks passed, Judah resumed his herding, the spring sun grew hot, and one evening my father said that Judah was going to the sheep shearing in a few days. So Rebecca and I slipped away to the spring, and she washed my hair and lined my eyes with kohl. She rubbed my breasts and neck and ear lobes with oil and myrrh. We left my father's tents early in the dark morning while everyone still slept, and when the sun was beginning to rise we stopped at a grove. Rebecca took the mourning clothes I had grown to hate and gave me a plain robe and veil. Then she went back to my father's to say I was sick and staying in my tent.

I walked along the sandy trail, watching

Hirah would ask, and the villagers would say, "What harlot? There's no harlot here."

the birds fly up from the bushes as I approached, and growing hot as the sun rose in the sky. When I reached the gates of Enaim I had to sit waiting for hours, turning away from the whistles and propositions of other men.

"Why are you sitting there if you're too good for me?" one shepherd said angrily, when I refused to look at him. I'm not selling my body, I'm getting my due, I thought to myself. Still, my heart beat like a gong in my chest, my body shuddered, and I had to go over the rightness of it all with myself again.

At last, in the late afternoon, Judah came, with his friend Hirah, the Adullamite, and their men, on their way to the sheep shearing. Judah left Hirah and came up as soon as he saw me. I had judged right, he was full of lust.

"Good afternoon, woman," he said, very politely. "I'd like you to come to my tent tonight." His voice wasn't quite easy when he said this.

My courage ebbed, and I dropped my head, afraid he would know me when I spoke. If he did, he would be shamed, he wouldn't go through with it. But I must speak. It would all be for nothing if I didn't make sure of his tokens. "To your tent? What will you give me?" I asked.

He showed no sign of recognition at the sound of my voice. "I'll send you a kid, as soon as I have one that's ready to leave its mother," he said. A kid was a handsome payment. Too much, I thought. But I kept bargaining.

"I'll need something to show you mean it," I said.

"Yes, of course." He removed his seal from his finger, and then gave me the band on his head that showed he was a chief. I was shocked to be holding these in my hands, and he misunderstood my hesitation.

"Here, take my staff as well," he said.

"Thank you," I said. "Thank you. Thank you."

"Come to my tent after dark," he said, and walked back to Hirah. So after dark I went to the place where his men had set up his tent, on the other side of the gates. Again my body had become a drum for my heart to beat against.

"It's me," I said, at the opening to his tent. "Here's the staff you gave me."

"Come in," he said. He was alone. I was frightened as I took off the veil. But he gave my face only a quick glance, and then began to remove his own robes. He still didn't recognize me. I was relieved by the girth of his strong body, aging, unlike the slender youths Er and Onan. I lay down on the mat, watching him shyly as he took me, almost absentmindedly, though he stroked my sides and breasts and showed pleasure.

While I felt his hardness against my legs, he opened his eyes. I was frightened. How could he look at me without recognizing me? Was I no longer Tamar, but a harlot, as he thought?

"Your heart is strong," he said, his head on my chest. He came into me, and this time it didn't hurt. My groin seemed to turn into an animal, running and thrashing, till he moaned, and I whimpered, and he slept. I lay quietly next to him. When he woke I kissed his old shoulder, then touched him, to excite him again. I wanted more seed. This would be my only chance.

"You will have two sons," he said, when he had moaned again. I waited without moving, wanting the seed to take root. After a long time I knew the sun must be about to rise. When I left the tent, taking the seal, the cord and the staff, I walked back along the track till I met Rebecca in the grove. She gave me my own clothes, and I put them on, thinking, not for long now. She carried the staff, wrapping the end in her robe so it wouldn't be recognized. Together we returned to my father's tents.

For days my body grew warm when I thought of what I had done. Yet I felt more tender when I saw Judah, on his return from the shearing, and had to stop myself from running up to him. My hands shook so much I was afraid my mother would notice, and each time I heard a noise I jumped. But after a couple of weeks I realized that my deed would not be noticed until my parents saw I was carrying a child.

After a few weeks I saw Hirah leaving the encampment early one morning with a new kid under his arm. I laughed to think that he was going to Enaim to give the prostitute her due. He would ask, and they would say, "What harlot? There's no harlot here." And indeed, he returned that evening with the kid. Then I was sad and frightened to have tricked Judah. His anger would be great when he learned the truth. Still, he had betrayed me first. Besides, I had already acted. I couldn't change my course.

In a few weeks my mother saw that my breasts were swollen and my belly was round. She wept and my father turned on me cruelly. "Judah will decide what should be done with you," he said.

"Take me to him, and I promise to accept his judgment," I said.

"He told you to wait for Shelah."

"I waited many years."

"How did it happen?" he wailed. "How? Tell me how?"

"I played harlot," I said, and I cried because he couldn't understand.

"You are no longer my daughter," my father said. He took me to where Judah was standing in the open between his tents. My father told Judah I had gotten with child by playing the harlot. The hot wind swept across the desert and blew my robes against my belly.

"Tamar has prostituted herself," Judah said, repeating my father's meaning as if he couldn't understand. His face was a refusal, blank and shocked.

I filled with rage. "Look at me, Judah, don't you recognize me?" I said.

"The penalty for prostitution is death," he said.

"Before you judge me, let me give you something to know me by." I pulled his possessions from my robes. He took his seal, band and staff and looked at them, and looked at me and saw me for the first time since he had chosen me for Er.

"Tamar. The harlot from the gates of Enaim," he said.

"Yes. You promised I would bear Jacob's sons." My mother and father were silent. I stood numbly in the sun, supported by the hot wind. Judah paced, holding the staff, his robes blowing. Then he stood still.

"I broke my promise to give her to Shelah. Tamar is more righteous than I," he told my father and mother. "She will come to live in my tents now."

When my time came I labored for many hours. It was so difficult that the midwife knew I was going to have twins. But they were tangled together and they couldn't get out. Then one of them thrust his hand out of me, and the midwife tied a thread around it, to show that he was first. He pulled his arm in and the other came first. In this, as in everything, we were out of order.

Judah came into the tent when both were born. "Remember you said I would have twins?" I asked him shyly, because we had never spoken of the night that I conceived.

"Yes, I remember," he said. "What will we name them?"

"Perez and Zerah," I said.

Judah was always respectful, formal, almost afraid of me. He lived for another ten years, to watch his sons grow. He sent me honey and nuts in the mornings. He brought me meat in the evenings. I never let another woman suckle my sons, but held Perez to one breast, Zerah to the other, watching their small mouths pump. I dressed them myself, held them to me, and took counsel with Judah about who their wives should be, before he died.

Now their wives live in tents near mine, and defy those who whisper about my past, by bringing their children to me for advice. They hold my righteousness to be great. They don't understand that my strength lay in following my own judgment when I came to a crossroads in my life. ■

Ingrid Hughes writes poetry and fiction and teaches English to immigrants in New York City.

(continued from page 6)

nding Again in the Diaspora

tered original
ing by Mauricio Gottleib

walk through The Museum of the Jewish Diaspora (*Beit Ha'tefutsot*) in Tel Aviv might lead one to believe that only *men* were taken from their homes in biblical Israel and scattered across the globe by Assyrian, Greek and Roman conquests. ld it be that the Jewish community ted for 2,000 years without women? is exactly how it appears on the walls he Museum of the Jewish Diaspora.

The museum is a major tourist attraction ell as a required part of every Israeli's ation. In its many displays we hope to a piece of our own history. We look at photographs hoping to catch a glimpse ur own grandparents as they hurry g a street in Prague or Buenos Aires. look to see how our synagogues looked stanbul and Alexandria. We want to v how we lived in Vienna and Addis ba. But if we're women, we don't see elves.

his absence was noted by Professor na Izraeli of Bar-Ilan University in a er "They Have Eyes But See Not" *chology of Women Quarterly*, 1993, published in the Israeli Journal *tica*). She concluded that the display, forces a stereotypical world in which en remain nameless, voiceless, and e no contribution to show for selves. Far from being a reflection of rical reality, women's marginalization is the erasure of women's contribution to Jewish survival."

Most of the men throughout the museum's many exhibits are identified by name and achievement while the few women whose faces grace the walls are anonymous. The section on education claims that "The Jewish Family Put the Child's Education Above Everything," however the display itself shows only little boys studying with their male teachers. In the wedding ceremonies there are no pictures of women going to the *mikvah* or women having a henna ceremony; women are only shown circling the bridegroom. In the 14 slides depicting the mourning process there are only three women.

Not only have the museum's curators simply left women out of their displays but they have gone to great lengths literally to erase their presence in the diaspora. A copy of a painting by 19th century artist, Mauricio Gottlieb, "Jews Praying in a Synagogue on Yom Kippur"—(the original of which hangs in the Tel Aviv museum just a few miles away)—was hung in the Diaspora Museum's permanent "Family Section" exhibit. But before this painting was hung 15 years ago, it was altered to remove the women whom Gottlieb painted praying behind the *mechitza*. In the museum's rendition there are only men praying, and a clear view of the synagogue's rear wall is afforded through the now empty women's gallery.

After Izraeli's article was published, Israeli-born Boston University law professor Pnina Lahav assumed that the museum would immediately correct the problem. Lahav visited the museum a few months later to find that nothing had changed and immediately sought an explanation.

Chief curator Joel Cahen wrote her back saying that the deletion was "in order to accentuate the figures in the foreground, and the *kavonah*," or holiness and spirit, of their prayers.

Lahav and Sheila Decter of the New England Chapter of the American Jewish Congress drafted a petition, using Cahen's

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own words, calling for a reproduction of the original painting to replace the altered one. Finally after political pressure from former Tel Aviv Mayor Shlomo Lahat, Knesset member Naomi Chazan, Israel's government comptroller Miriam Porat, Arts Minister Shulamit Aloni and hundreds of petitions and phone calls, the painting was taken down.

But the struggle does not end with the removal of one offensive painting. Lahav now chairs a project to identify and expose institutionalized displays of Jewish life which trivialize women. In the U.S. they plan to look at the representation of women in the Encyclopedia Judaica and at the Holocaust Museum in Washington, D.C. Izraeli will form a similar public commission in Israel to research how the contribution of women is acknowledged in various Israeli museums.

To get involved, contact AJC, Commission on Women's Equality, One Lincoln Plaza, Boston, MA 02111.

-R.B.S.

Women on the Air in Israel

You'd think that having radio and television producers calling Israeli women's organizations for resources would be unalloyedly good news. Not so, according to Leslie Sacks, spokeswoman for the Israel Women's Network, the umbrella group for women's organizations in Israel, interviewed recently in Jerusalem. "The media in Israel is becoming increasingly tabloid-like. New local radio stations and the new second television network (which is the first one to carry advertising, no boon to the image of women) do lots of talk shows because they are cheap to do," notes Sacks. And that's where the problem lies; women as victims—whether of spousal abuse, unjust divorce laws or employment discrimination—are hot subjects for these shows. "The media wants only personal testimony," says Sacks, referring to the lurid details of women's unhappiness that the talk show hosts and audiences seem to feed upon. "They only want a woman who was raped, beaten or ran away from home." Sacks adds that when she tells producers that she can provide women judges, sociologists, and others who are working to analyze women's rights in Israel, these offers are turned down in favor of the suffering victim.

The good news is that Channel One (more like Public Television in the United States) has convened a Committee on the Status of Women. Sacks, who serves on the Committee, notes that its victories include creating regulations for how women are to be addressed on the air. In the past, a male guest would be "Professor So-and-So. A woman on the same program would be referred to by her first name," no matter what her stature or title. Sacks's title and job are, in fact, unique in Israel. She says she is the "only full-time feminist spokesperson in the country."

—Susan Weidman Schneider

Tsirl Waletzky

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CLASSROOM OF HER OWN

***My Daughter, the Teacher: Jewish Teachers in the New York City Schools* by Ruth Jacknow Markowitz [Rutgers University Press, 1993] Cloth $40, Paper $15.**

Less acclaimed than their more famous tor brothers, female Jewish teachers etheless fulfilled their parents' pitions faithfully, too. Now, in Ruth know Markowitz's *My Daughter, the cher*, Jewish teachers in the New York public schools finally receive their . This history focuses on the years veen the first and second World Wars n young Jewish women, the ambitious ghters of immigrant parents, entered the ching profession in extraordinary bers.

By the end of World War II, Jewish men became a majority of New York public school teachers. To paint a up portrait, Markowitz follows the er trajectory of over 60 retired female hers whom she interviewed. She also s data gathered from a sample of sands of teacher record files located in Board of Education's musty erooms.

The book moves thematically, nning with immigrant kitchens, where ams of study were first nurtured by dish-speaking mothers. Markowitz next ers public school classrooms where er daughters encountered their erican role models: English-speaking hers of Irish background. Then come ultuous years when Jewish students, ermined to gain the education that ld allow them to teach, clashed with Gentile teachers and deans over such es as political activism, support of the ent peace movement, and even dress es.

Markowitz notes that some of the utes really represented disguised anti- itism, for deans disdained their Jewish students' lack of polish and their immigrant backgrounds, Jewish women mastered an increasingly rigorous curriculum in order to attain the final prize of certification. Yet even upon graduation many faced the additional hurdles of certification—its demanding tests, especially the oral test in which examiners often failed Jews if their English betrayed any Yiddish accents or inflections.

During the Depression, when New York City had more teachers than it needed, very few new teachers were certified, despite their clear qualifications. But Jewish women persisted, working as substitute teachers and taking the tests over and over again until they attained their goal: a classroom of their own.

PHOTO COURTESY OF NEW YORK CITY BOARD OF EDUCATION ARCHIVES

Unlike the enduring Jewish vision of becoming a doctor (a profession Jewish men had pursued for many generations in both medieval and modern times), a Jewish woman's dream of becoming a teacher involved embracing new American values of working as a professional. Though their mothers encouraged them and shared their dreams, Jewish public school teachers embraced an American ideal of a new woman that departed significantly from their immigrant mothers' lives. Yet few Jewish teachers rejected their parents' values, and, unlike the situation with upwardly mobile sons, Markowitz finds no unbridgeable gulf between teachers and their immigrant parents.

Most teachers tried to integrate Jewish values learned in immigrant homes into their new lives as professionals, combining an American career with traditional marriage and motherhood, relying upon family networks to care for young children, and supporting extended family members with their paychecks. Many enthusiastically embraced unionism and left-wing politics, understanding—as they risked their positions to improve the lot of teachers and students and worked to change society—that they were continuing their parents' radical traditions.

Yet, as Markowitz points out, the opportunity to acquire professional training as a teacher depended also upon the specific character of New York City. New York's public school system, one of the largest in the nation, expanded enormously during the 1920s to meet pressing needs of a rapidly growing population of immigrant children. New York offered free college education for men at City College and for women at Hunter College. Future teachers could choose to attend free normal schools (teacher training schools) or Hunter or Brooklyn colleges—a crucial condition for poor immigrants who might be willing to forego a daughter's wages but could not afford to pay for her education. Many young women, in fact, held part-time jobs while in school; so many Hunter girls worked at Macy's on Saturday that the 1937 yearbook dubbed the store "the Saturday branch."

Unlike many American cities, New York City allowed married women to continue to teach, though it required pregnant women to take mandatory two-year maternity leaves. Perhaps most significant, the city provided equal pay for equal work, though most men worked only in high schools and supervisory positions. Despite bias on the Board of Examiners, New York's public school system was open to female merit. Immigrant mothers could imagine their daughters as teachers because New York City, unlike many other large cities, offered the opportunity to

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fulfill their dreams. "My daughter, the teacher" was a New York story.

Unfortunately, New York City also robbed the dreams of a small but significant minority of Jewish teachers. Anti-unionism, anti-Semitism, and anti-communism drove dedicated teachers from the public school system in the 1940s and 1950s. Although some might argue that anti-communism proved to be the most virulent force, Markowitz observes that all of the teachers that the New York City Board of Education fired during the post-World War II red scare were Jewish and members of the Teachers Union. Harassment of radical Jewish teachers started during the Depression (in fact, punishment of Jewish women began in college when deans and presidents disciplined students who supported the student peace movement), but investigations and revoking of licenses did not occur until the postwar era. The chill that settled over the public schools in the 1950s only lifted gradually in the 1960s. For those who were involved, the fear never dissipated—most of Markowitz's interviewees, these many years later, still asked her not to use their real names this book.

Markowitz blends oral history a statistics, memoirs and newspap accounts into a comprehensive a compelling history. It is a sto intimately connected to many of us w grew up in New York City. Reading H penultimate chapter on the postw persecutions, I suddenly discovere teacher's name I recognized: In 19 Mildred Flacks was fired from her j teaching in a Bedford-Stuyvesant pub school because of her political activi on behalf of its poor black communi Until the moment I read this, I had n known of the heroism and idealism my second grade teacher.

My Daughter, the Teacher reclaims lost generation of Jewish women for and our children.

–Deborah Dash Moo

Deborah Dash Moore teaches American a Jewish studies at Vassar College. Her m recent book is To The Golden Citie Pursuing the American Jewish Dream Miami and L.A., *(The Free Press).*

NEW AND NOTEWORTHY:

S/HE Created Them: Feminist Retellings of Biblical Stories by Naomi Graetz [Menorah House, 1298 Hastings, Teaneck, NJ 07666; or, N.A.M.A.Z. Books, 42 Eshel, Omer, Israel, 1993; $9.95]

Midrash, a genre which flourished between 400 and 1200 C.E., today is exploding, writes Graetz, "largely thanks to feminism," Here Graetz, a professor at Ben Gurion University, brings us 14 thoughtful, moving, new feminist *midrashim*--both exegetical and eisegetical-- about our our Biblical foremothers.

Celebration and Renewal: Rites of passion in Judaism, edited by Rela M. Geffen [The Jewish Publication Society, 1994; cloth $34.95; paper $19.95]

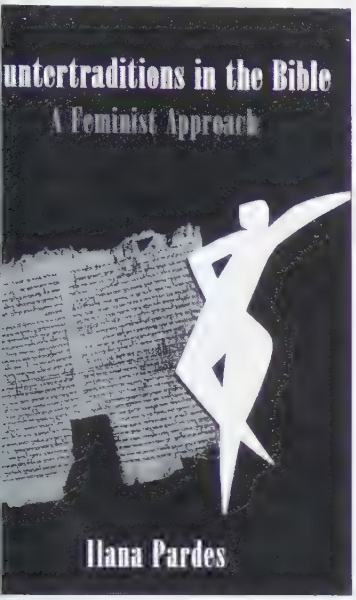
A primer, comprised of 10 essays (mostly halakhic and sociological in orientation) which address the Jewish life cycle: birth; parenting young children; bar/bat mitzvah; conversion; marriage; midlife; divorce; sickness; death and mourning. An excellent gift for those in need of a basic, conservative, one-volume Jewish reference book.

A Woman's Book of Grieving by Nessa Rapoport [William Morrow, 1994; $15.00]

In words precise and brimming with feeling, this book of brief prose-poems captures the complex ways in which death shifts the interiors of our lives, and how grief is affected by the healing power of female friendship. Rapoport, author of *Preparing for Sabbath*, wrote this book, a " liturgy of consolation," to be passed from one friend to another as we endure the loneliest of human experiences.

***Countertraditions in the Bible: A Feminist Approach* by Ilana Pardes [Harvard University Press, Cambridge Massachusetts, 1992] $12.95**

What can a Jewish feminist find to love in the Bible? instream feminism has tended to treat traditional religion in general, and the Bible in particular, as uniformly oppressive to women and femaleness. But a new generation of feminist biblical scholars is making use of the fact that Scripture is by no means monolithic, but profoundly layered; the Pentateuch alone contains multiple strata dating from the 10th to the 5th century B.C.E., filled with fascinating inconsistencies and contradictions spliced together and only partially smoothed over by its ancient editors.



While Ilana Pardes emphatically agrees that biblical texts are in eral powerfully patriarchal, what fascinates her is the evidence alf-suppressed "antithetical female voices" that hint of older theistic stories, express female power, female skepticism, and ale eroticism—and even challenge the masculinity of the enant between God and Israel.

Pardes, who teaches Hebrew literature at Princeton University, ins her book with a survey of earlier inist approaches to the Bible, from the ragist Elizabeth Cady Stanton in the 19th tury, to the recent work of Phyllis Trible, her Fuchs and Mieke Bal—showing the king diversity of interpretations possible n within an ideological critique of riarchy, and arguing that conservative olars need to pay attention to this branch of lical analysis. Her own readings are a nderful mix of careful attention to the rew text, a rich command of Rabbinic and dern commentary, and a fresh sense of the ny ways women act and suffer in the Bible.

She notices, for example, that while Adam upposed to be the name-giver according to st (male) accounts of the creation story, , in Genesis 4:1, not only is the name-giver er first son, but startlingly asserts herself as reatress alongside, or comparable to, God. have created a man equally/together with Lord."] Though almost all translations guise it, "Eve's naming-speech may be ceived as a trace from an earlier

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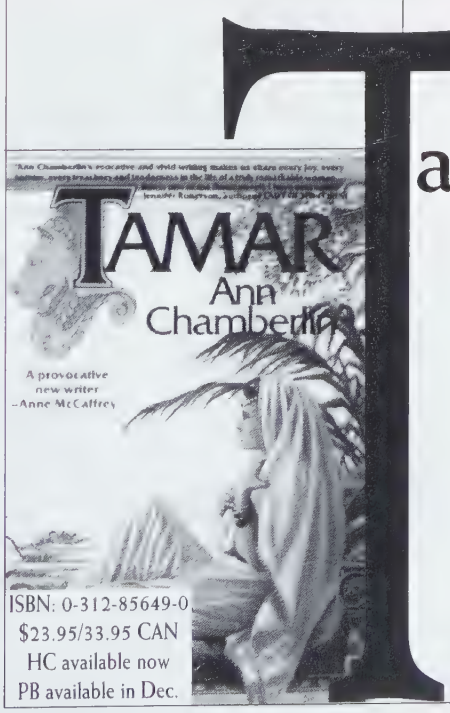

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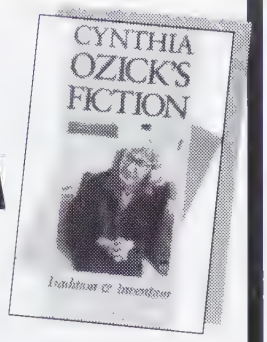

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mythological phase in which mother-goddesses were very much involved in the process of creation."

In her chapter on Exodus 4:24-26, the cryptic "Bridegroom of Blood" story in which God attempts to kill Moses on the way to Egypt and is stopped when Zipporah circumcises her son and touches "his feet" with the foreskin, Pardes brilliantly argues that Zipporah may be a trace memory of the savior-goddess Isis. Sounds incredible? Zipporah means "bird," and Isis is often depicted with wings; both figures save their husbands by enacting rituals connected with the penis.

Many commentators have observed how exceptional the book of Ruth is, in its representation of female bonding. Pardes goes further: She finds in the love between Naomi and Ruth a parallel to the Demeter-Persephone myth, an idyllic reversal of the Rachel-Leah rivalry, and a counter-ideology to the Biblical stress on exclusion of the Other. Is it an accident that a woman-centered story also supports an ethos of tolerance? Pardes doesn't think so.

In the Song of Songs, she sees "an antipatriarchal model of love" between men and women, and between ourselves and God, which is stunning in its erotic woman-centeredness, and metaphorically challenges the Law of Israel. Her discussion of how this "deviant text" came to be admitted to the Bible, and what its presence means in terms of "a dialectic between wishes and restrictions" in the Bible and Jewish life, is both intellectually brilliant and emotionally satisfying.

Not all the texts Pardes examines are hopeful. Rachel's story is tragically limited. The "nameless wife" of Job is rebuked for questioning, and omitted from the "scene of familial bliss" at the close of the Book of Job. Here, as elsewhere, Pardes recognizes patriarchal dread of female power. Yet she insists that the traces of our mothers in biblical texts can add "color and intensity to our own lives," if we follow the example of the Shulamite with her lover in the Song of Songs (3:4): "I held him, and would not let him go, until I had brought him into my mother's house, and into the chamber of her that conceived me."

Though the "mother's house" is a rare construction in the Bible, is remains a precious one.

—Alicia Ostriker

***Pride Against Prejudice: Transformi Attitudes to Disability* by Jenny Mor [New Society Publishers, Philadelphia, PA, 1993, $12.95].**

***Feminism and Disability* by Barbara Hillyer [University of Oklahoma Press, Norman, Oklahoma, 1993, $27.95].**

These two exceptional books should read by anyone whose self-improveme curriculum includes becoming more exp at compassion. Author Jenny Mor (feminist Ph.D., trade-union and lab organizer, and divorced mother of an infa climbed onto a railway ledge one summ evening in order to rescue a stranded chi and ended up, instead, at age 33, paraplegic for life. Even as she lay in t hospital after the accident, however, h

"It is not the inability to walk which disables someone, but the steps into the building."

feminist perspective gave her grit. When t doctor told her gloomily that she w "tragically" and permanently paralyzed, s writes: "Only one person could say it wa tragedy and that was me—and I was prepared to say that. I was so offended t this doctor seemed to be writing off my lif

Feminism helps Morris understand t what disables a person as much as (or mo than) physical or intellectual restrictions the social attitudes which create restricti of their own. "To put it very simply," s writes, "it is not the inability to walk wh disables someone, but the steps into t building." (As a disabled person myself find such fighting words more empoweri than tomes of psychological self-help te wittering on about coping skills.)

Feminists understand the potential f oppression that underlies so-called offers "help." Morris quotes Pam Evans (anot wheelchair user): "Sometimes help is quite what it seems: it demands a return. I a way for those offering it to ma themselves feel 'good.' We are being us to this end. We have to indulge their illusi that they are giving, when in fact they a

taking." Like any minority people, the bled have some bitter knowledge about t happens when one refuses to extend the majority culture "the gift of our itude."

n a horrifying chapter on Nazi many, Morris mentions that the pulsory sterilization laws of the Third ch (which sterilized half a million fectives") could not be classified as war nes because similar laws had only ntly been upheld in the U.S. She notes until May of 1943, Nazi "mercy ng" of disabled minors excluded Jewish dren—"on the grounds that they did not erve the 'merciful act.'" Similarly, many's adult euthanasia program of abled people did not, in its early tment, include Jews, because it was an or to be offered such an extermination vice, and, Morris quotes, "the ernment did not want to grant this anthropic act to the Jews."

The second book, Barbara Hillyer's inism and Disability, is a tour de force its bibliography alone, as well as for its pters on "Passing," "Mother-Blaming," ief," and "Productivity and Pace." yer, a women's studies professor at the versity of Oklahoma, is the divorced and ian mother of an adopted, physically mentally disabled grown daughter. She in other words, been around.

Arguing cogently from the point of view caregiver, Hillyer notes: "One reason the great difficulty most of us have in king out ways of changing dependent-egiver relationships is our logical ance on the concept of equality—that ple should be treated the same—an al that is especially difficult to attain en one person can walk or see or hear or son and the other cannot." She invokes ol Gilligan in pointing out that justice is "highest value in masculine morality, women's morality places a higher value an ethic of care, whose premise is that one should be hurt."

Disabled people," she continues, "force o face the problem of reciprocity, the estment in a rela-tionship by both ticipants. Reciprocity involves the ficulty of recognizing each other's ds, relying on the other, asking and eiving help, delegating responsibility, ing and receiving empathy, and pecting boundaries." She concludes that, "The reciprocity worked out between a woman with disabilities and a caring woman can serve as a model for the rest of us—but only if we attend thoughtfully to what they have learned and believe them when they tell us about it."

In a chapter called "Notes Toward a New Theory," Hillyer comments that people who are abled often "impose mourning on disabled people as a defense of their own values." For example, "if a woman cannot use her legs but refuses to mourn for the loss, we may be forced to ask questions about why we place such a high value on walking around. If a woman with a chronic illness adapts her pace to her illness and does not grieve over the loss of a conventionally rapid pace, we may have to question the high value we place on rushing."

Both of these books reaffirm (some of us, at times, forget) how loving, inclusive and brainy feminist ideology is. Though we may think of ourselves as all-weather feminists, some of us, certainly, do not really fasten that agenda on to a consideration of disability. And that, indeed, is the authors' underlying point: Feminist values need always to stretch our reflexes, not just our theories.

Jenny Morris and Barbara Hillyer, each challenged singularly, remind one of Adrienne Rich's stout desideratum: "I refuse to become a seeker for cures./ Everything that has ever/ helped me has come through what already/ lay stored in me. Old things, diffuse, unnamed, lie strong/ across my heart./ This is from where/ my strength comes, even when I miss my strength/ even when it turns on me/ like a violent master."

— Susan Schnur

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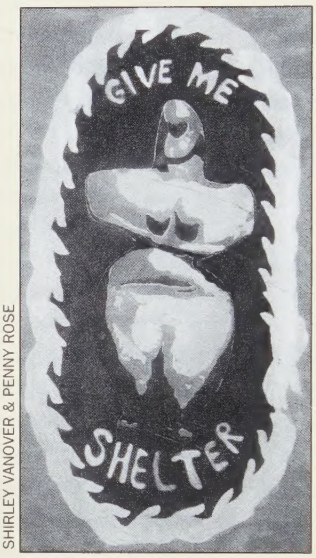


SHIRLEY VANOVER & PENNY ROSE

Sukkah Cards reproduce colorful panels created for"Succah by theWater" an annual celebration for women Toronto. $18.00 per set of 7; credit cards accepted. *New Israel Fund of Canada, 40 Dundas St.W., #231, Box 29, Toronto M5G 2C2, Ontario, Canada, (416)340-0507.*

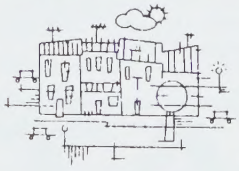
A call for blessings for a collection from various religions: Send spiritual blessings such as for houses, travelers, newborn children, e to *Philip Deemer, 7030 LynnetreeWay, Citrus Heights CA 95610-3932.*

HOLOCAUST RELATED

Project Search, a free Holocau and War Victims Tracing Service, helps reunite family members separated during Wo War II, establish the date of a family member's death, or provide certification for repara tions and or pensions to civilia

TEACHING TOLERANCE

The Crown Heights History Project is a groundbreaking collaborative exhibition and education project exploring the lives and traditions of African- Americans, Caribbean-Americans and Lubavitch Hasidic Jews. Coordinated by a Jewish anthropologist, Jill Vexler, and a black historian, Craig Wilder, the project involved extensive community participation in oral history interviews, documentary photography and video, and the donation of artifacts. The participatory exhibits include performances, walking tours, community forums, foods from these groups and an explanation of hair styles-from dreadlocks to Hasidic sidecurls. Through the fall of 1994 at *The Brooklyn Children's Museum, 145 Brooklyn Ave., Brooklyn, NY 11213. (718)488-6260. The Brooklyn Historical Society, 128 Pierrepont St., Brooklyn, NY 11201. (718)624-0890, and The Society for the Preservation of Weeksville & Bedford-Stuyvesant History, 1698 Bergen St., Brooklyn, NY 11213. (718)756-5250.*



Teaching Tolerance, a semiannual magazine published by the Southern Poverty Law Center, a nonprofit legal and education foundation, features philosophical and practical resources. Free to educators. *Teaching Tolerance, 400 Washington Ave., Montgomery, AL 36104. FAX (205)264-3121.*

Connecting with beads: The work of the late Myriam Mendilow, who founded Lifeline for the Elderly Craftshops in Jerusalem, is perpetuated by the U.S.-based Myriam's Dream. Project Kesher Konnection offers a packet of ceramic beads made by the elderly in Israel with lesson plans and ideas for intergenerational programming, teaching appreciation and respect for the elderly. Children create objects incorporating the beads for display, and may sell them to raise funds. $7 per packet (enough for a class) from *Iris Schwartz, 1 Robin Hood Rd., Suffern NY 10901. (914)357-2157.*

Helping the Elderly: Funds from Myriam's Dream (above) are disbursed in grants to improve the life of the Jewish aged in many parts of the world. If you travel and make contact with Jewish communities in Eastern Europe or Asia, let local leaders know they may apply for assistance to *Karen Kushner, 309 Goodman's Hill Rd., Sudbury MA 01776. Contributions may be made to Myriam's Dream, Inc. and sent to Joyce Malakoff, 42 York Dr., New City, NY 10956.*

INTERNATIONAL TRAVEL

Helsinki: What is the Bible's image of woman? The fates of Judith, Ruth, Hannah and Eve are explored in The Bible 1994, an international drama festival with 60 women actors from Estonia, Latvia, Sweden, Norway and Finland who will perform in five world premieres July 28-August 4. *The Raging Roses Theatre, Luotsikatu 14/PL 162, 00161 Helsinki, Finland. 358-0-630 400, FAX 358-0-669 568.*

Amsterdam: Jewish Women: Tradition and Renewal is a course—in English—offered by The Amsterdam Summer University and the Jewish Historical Museum, July 25-July 29. Lectures will take a feminist approach to Jewish religious texts and to the problems Jewish women face within the tradition. *Amsterdam Summer University, P. O. Box 53066, 1007 RB Amsterdam, The Netherlands. 31-20-6200225. FAX 31-20-6249368.*

Israel: A Women's Study Tour November 1-11, 1994, will explore—with guest scholar Judith Lichtman, president of the Women's Legal Defense Fund in Washington, DC—the challenges facing Israeli women, examining their special contribution to building peace as they continue to struggle for equality. Contact *Susan Bandler, New Israel Fund, 1625 K St. NW #500, Washington, DC 20006. (202)223-3333.* (To spend a day visiting innovative Israeli non-profit organizations working to promote social justice while on your own trip call Liora Asa at the same number.)

Jerusalem: Women, War and Peace: The Vision and the Strategies—an international conference of Women in Black and women's peace movements—will be held December 29-31 1994. Women throughout the world—both activists and scholars—are invited to share their expertise in an activist conference with workshops, a mass vigil and march through Jerusalem, and the award of the first Women in Black Peace Prize. Special invitations are being extended to women peace activists in former Yugoslavia, the Mothers of the Plaza de Mayo in Argentina, Greenham Common Women, Black Sash women and others. If you wish to present, please indicate your subject and format (workshop, panel, etc.). Contact *Erella Shadmi, 4/11 Dresner Street, Jerusalem, Israel 93814. (02)718597, FAX (02)259626.*

London: Connect with Jewish feminist activities by contacting the *Jewish Women's Network, Sharon Lee, 41 Dorset Drive, Edgeware, Middx, HA8 7NT, London, England. 081-9525308.* **Bruria Books** specializes in Jewish women's literature including fiction, biography, sociological studies, law, memoirs, essays, Jewish women's spirituality. Contact *Sally Berkovic 081-2033678.* Also note **Jewish Women's Aid,** assisting victims of domestic violence in the Jewish community, now has a free phone help line *0800-59-1203.*

ivors. Magen David Adom rael assists in the research. act your local Red Cross ter or *Project Search /Social ices, 150 Amsterdam Ave, York, NY 10023. (212)787- X2239 or 2242.*

u were a child hidden ng the Holocaust and would terested in talking about experience with others in a ol, religious establishment, r center, women's group, on or television, alone or with rs, request a speakers bureau ication. *The Hidden Child ndation, 823 UN Plaza, New , NY 10017. (212)490-2525.*

YOUR OWN BACKYARD

ghten environmental vism in your congregation gh worship, study, and cacy. Hold an "outdoor ronmental Shabbat" or buy gy-saving gadgets to sell in temple gift shop. Send for formation kit; write to share your synagogue is doing. *onal Religious Partnership for the Environment, 1047 Amsterdam Ave., New York, NY 10025. (212)316-7441. FAX (212)316-7547.*

A prayer for a ramp. An organization offering philosophical support and technical assistance to make your synagogue accessible to handicapped people is the *Torah Organization for Disability Access , 3409 Shelburne Rd., Baltimore, MD 21208. (414)764-6132.*

PERIODICALS

Kerem is a journal on contemporary Jewish spiritual life, rituals, midrash, prayer, and the lifecycle. Co-editors Gilah Langner and Sara R. Horowitz recently featured midrashim on Sarah and the binding of Isaac, Rebekah's marriage to Isaac, and Ruth; also *yizkor* prayers to be said by victims of abuse, and for stillborn and infant deaths. $8.50. *Kerem, 2555 Pennsylvania, NW #504, Washington, DC 20037.*

Identity, Ceremony, Community: Jewish Women's Spirituality,"by Phyllis Holman Weisbard, in *Feminist Collections: A Quarterly of Women's Studies Resources* (Fall 1993), is part of a special issue on women's spirituality and religion. $2.75, to University of Wisconsin-Madison. Also useful: *Feminist Periodicals* and *New Books on Women & Feminism.* both from the *Women's Studies Librarian, 430 Memorial Library, 728 State St., Madison, WI 53706. (608)263-5754.*

American Women Poets Experience Israel in *Shirim: A Jewish Poetry Journal* (December 1993). It follows an issue on Israeli women and their relationships with the land. $4. *Shirim, 4611 Vesper Ave., Sherman Oaks, CA 91403.*

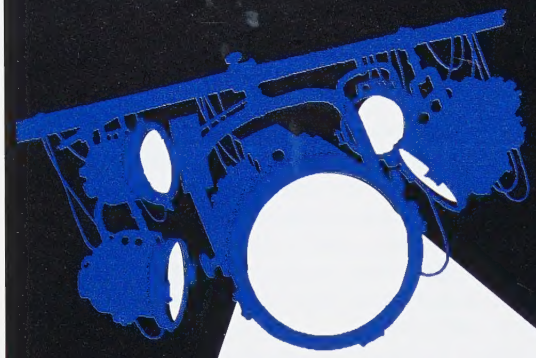
YOUR TALENT NEEDED

Jewish girls: for an anthology of fiction, poetry and nonfiction on growing up Jewish and female in America, send manuscripts up to1000 words, with SASE by July 15. *Marlene Adler Marks, Jewish Journal of Greater LA, 3660 Wilshire Blvd. #204, LA, CA 90010 or via Compuserve 71764,2060.*

Psychology of Jewish Women is the theme of a collection of papers to be published as an outgrowth of the Judaism Feminism and Psychology Conference (Seattle, 1992). Propose a paper to *Kayla Weiner or Arinna Moon, 600 First Ave., #530, Seattle, WA 98104. (206)343-0828.*

Jewish Visions by Jewish Artists: send for specifications for a juried exhibit in Fall 1994, in honor of LILITH Magazine's 18th anniversary. *Jewish Women's Art Exhibit, UJA Federation, 130 E. 59th St,. #447, New York, NY 10022.*

—compiled by Naomi Danis



NAZI DAUGHTER: a monologue

Sibylle, the daughter of a Nazi, in her 40s
Setting: Germany, the present
Dramatic

SIBYLLE: My father once told me that he was never given anything he wanted as a child. For example, he wanted to have a raspberry soda with his meals. As a matter of principle, he never got it. That was the family way. Not that my brothers and I didn't receive . . . Beatings were routine, again, in the time-honored practice. If I tore my dress, a beating. Poor marks, a beating. If I talked back to my parents . . .

I remember growing up, Sunday School, hearing the story of Abraham and Isaac. I didn't react the way the other kids did. It never struck me as strange that a father would tie his child to a rock because someone had told him to. You see, I thought parents had a right to kill their children.

When I was 16, I went to Sachsenhausen. I came home and told my mother what I'd seen. Her comment: "The things you do to yourself . . . " That same year, I gave them a book. In it, the author mentions a doctor. Well, it seems my parents knew this doctor and, according to them, the day the book places him in the camp, he wasn't there at all. But at our house, delivering one of my brothers. Which was all the proof they needed to know that "this six million" wasn't all it was cracked up to be.

The crowning touch was their cynicism in naming me Sibylle, so that my initials would always be "S.S." One of my father's little jokes.

My brothers say they never had a problem with him and, the fact is, it is difficult to charge Father with anything specific. By sheer accident, it seems he was never present when anything horrendous was happening. He sailed through his de-Nazification. Still, he remained a fascist to his dying day. You can't imagine . . . Once my older brother was supposed to memorize a poem. Every time he stumbled, Father . . . I can still hear the screams. Mother took me by the hand. "Father's going to kill Erich. We better leave." She actually said those words.

[This stage monologue, from the book The Best Women's Stage Monologues 1993, *edited by Jocelyn Beard (Smith and Kraus Publishers, Newbury, VT), is intended to be used by actresses who are seeking audition material (as the book puts it) that is "fresh and interesting." Based on the book* Born Guilty, *by Peter Sichrovsky, the stage adaptation is by Ari Roth. The stage performance rights are controlled exclusively by Samuel French, Inc., 45 West 25th St. New York City, NY 10010. No professional performance or non-professional performance of the play may be given without obtaining in advance the written permission of Samuel French, Inc. and paying the requisite fee.]*